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JULY 1993 V. 26 no. 7 A MONTHLY REVIEW EDITED BY R. EMMETT TYRRELL, JR.

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by Yale Kramer

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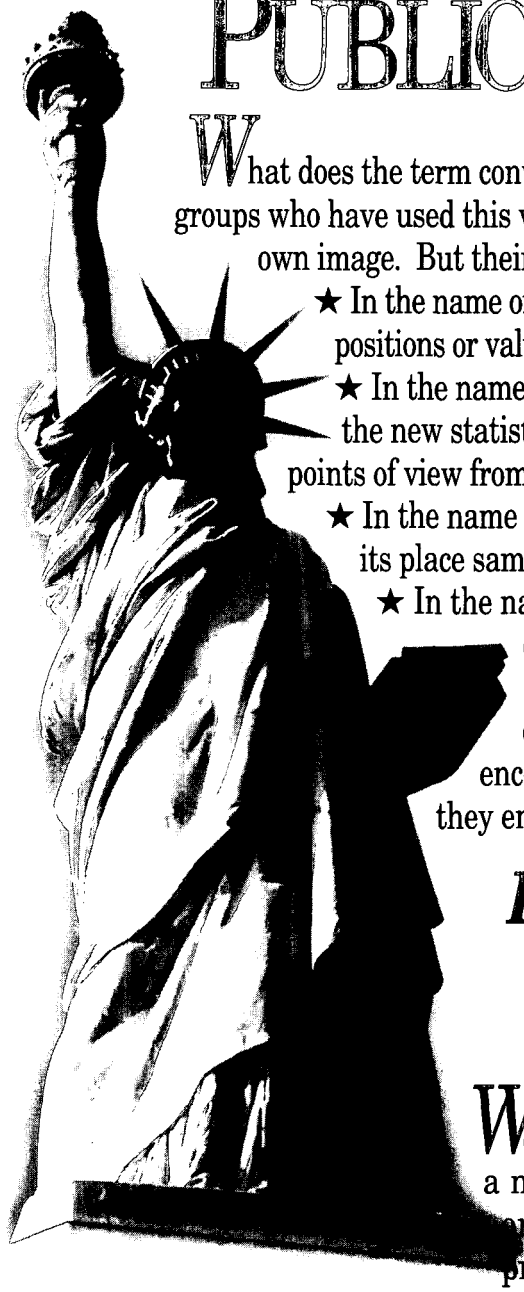
PUBLIC INTEREST LAW



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★ In the name of "free speech" they all too often enforce only the ideology of the new statists and the politically correct police and seek to prevent all other points of view from having access to the marketplace.

★ In the name of "family" they seek to dismantle the family and substitute in its place same sex unions and relationships of convenience.

★ In the name of new found "rights," they endorse, promote and seek to enforce, with our tax dollars, the legalized killing of the unborn up to the day of birth; and the medical extermination of the elderly, the disabled, and the seriously ill. Rather than encourage those who have lost the desire to live to choose life, they encourage them in suicide.

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Read Donald Lambro's column on page 1.

LET'S SEE... SHALL THIS ONE BE A NEW GAS TAX, OR A BIG CUT IN SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS?..

GAYS IN THE MILITARY

For quick reference to all articles, turn to TOPIC INDEX on page 1.

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Peace in the Middle East (2)

Is the peace with Egypt an encouraging example for Israel?

In the on-again/off-again Mid-East Peace negotiations the Arabs expect that, in exchange for peace, the territories that they consider to be "occupied" by Israel be restored to them, specifically, the so-called "West Bank", Gaza, and the Golan Heights.

What are the facts?

Peace with Egypt is the coldest possible. For its agreement to make true peace with Israel, Egypt received the huge Sinai Peninsula in which Israel had invested over $10 billion. It had created flourishing cities, some of the most advanced military and naval installations in the world, and had developed oil fields that would have made it energy independent for the foreseeable future. Without firing a shot, Egypt received all of this, plus generous grants from the United States—$40 billion to date. What Egypt gave in return was a piece of paper. And even that was hedged. It would allow Egypt to join in an "Arab War" against Israel. The peace between Israel and Egypt, which the Israelis had envisioned to be like the peace between Germany and France, turned out, unfortunately, to be the "coldest peace" possible. It is, less of a peace than a de facto state of non-belligerence. The Israeli ambassador in Cairo is isolated and blacklisted and does not participate in any official functions of the Egyptian government. There is practically no trade between the two countries and no cultural exchange. The public sector of Egypt, which constitutes 80% of the total economy is forbidden to do business with Israel. Private enterprises are actively discouraged and often threatened when they try to become engaged with Israeli firms. Israeli firms are barred form submitting tenders for local projects. For "security reasons" Israeli firms are not allowed to participate in trade fairs. Although quite a few Israelis visit Egypt, hardly any Egyptians go to Israel since those who do wish to visit are summoned to the security police for lengthy interrogation.

Not forthcoming on diplomatic front. Many Israelis have been killed in Egypt or on the Egyptian border. The Egyptian media, including the official and semi-official press, are full of anti-Israel and anti-Jewish venom, preaching hatred and prejudice. There have been numerous instances of "crazed" Egyptian soldiers shooting up Israeli buses traveling along the border highways, to the general applause of the state-controlled media. On the diplomatic front, the Egyptians aren't any more forthcoming. Egypt spearheaded the campaign to keeping the "Zionism is racism" resolution in the U.N., contrary to U.S. wishes. Egypt exerts much effort to prevent African countries from establishing or renewing diplomatic relations with Israel. Egyptian diplomats, including Butros-Butros Ghali, now secretary general of the United Nations, lobbied fervently against the loan guarantees that Israel needed to absorb and to settle the hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees who have already arrived or will still arrive form the former Soviet Union.

> "Israel's present government must be commended for proceeding with the greatest caution in the current peace negotiations."

The saving grace for Israel in its very cold peace with Egypt is that the Sinai is very large, and serves as a buffer zone. But in the Golan Heights, which the Syrians wish to have returned in exchange for "peace", and the "West Bank" and Gaza, which the Palestinians whish to have given to them as a "reward" for stopping the "intifada", there is no room at all for buffer zones. Although autonomy for the native Arab population is definitely an Israeli policy goal and a commitment under the Camp David Accords, the "West Bank" and Gaza and the Golan cannot possibly be surrendered to another sovereignty for any foreseeable future. It would make Israel totally indefensible. If the peace with Egypt is an example of what peace with Syria or with the Palestinians would look like, Israel's present government must be commended for proceeding with the greatest caution in the current negotiations and not to entrust its survival to empty promises. Only when the Arabs truly accept Israel as part of the Middle East should any further "land for peace" adjustments be considered.

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THE AMERICAN SPECTATOR

Volume 26 Number 7, July 1993

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ABOUT THIS MONTH

by

Wladyslaw Pleszczynski

PRESIDENT BILL'S APPETITE for lying and deception is gargantuan, so it's understandable that he would take his failing act coast to coast. In San Diego, he promised a middle-class tax cut sometime in the next four years, just not now. In Los Angeles he said Reaganomics "ran the country into a ditch." (For an immediate corrective, turn to George Gilder's "Wealth and Poverty Revisited," page 32.) He spoke of "massive spending cuts" and "prudent revenue increases" and of his determination "to get a hold of this deficit." Then came the alleged haircut on the tarmac at LAX and a flight, it turned out, into ignominy. By the weekend he was in New Hampshire, oozing insincerity before a group of technical-school bubbas ("Every day when I get up in the White House and go to the Oval Office to work, I think about the people I met here . . .") and snapping incoherently at an uncowed critic of his tax hikes. ("You won't listen to the election. After the election, your administration increased the deficit.") Just to remind you he'll never change, when asked the following week in Washington about the high-level corruption and abuse of power revealed in Travelgate, he automatically declared: "I had nothing to do with any decision . . ."

I GUESS WITH THESE PEOPLE, it's a way of life. Has the White House ever seen press spokesmen more mendacious than George ("Doogie") Stephanopoulos and Dee Dee Myers? If the Independent Counsel law is extended, they might be its first victims. Then there's Hillary. She's too busy trying to sound like Leon Wieseltier and look like Jessica Lange, so maybe outright lying is less important to her than self-delusion. Others in the so-called administration are already paying the price for having joined in the first place. Has anyone noticed the pained expression on Al Gore's face of late? If not for the ecological damage it would cause, he'd just as soon hide himself under a rock. Another saintly figure is Janet Reno, much beloved in Washington for standing up to David Koresh and now the White House for its FBI caper, the same Reno who didn't raise a peep when Bill and Hillary stacked her Justice Department with cronies, misfits, and nihilists.

YOU'VE GOT TO FEEL for the poor liberals (at least some of them), whose world continues to crumble while they remain without a clue. To paraphrase the Clintonite slogan, it's the culture, knuckleheads! As their many grand projects veer out of control, addicted liberals can turn for treatment this month to Yale Kramer, reporting on the homosexual wars being fought on the Broadway stage (page 18); to Tom Bethell, illuminating Pat Buchanan's position in the culture wars (page 16); and to John Corry, our distinguished new Presswatch columnist (page 42; and not to worry—longtime *TAS* Presswatcher Terry Eastland will continue to appear in these pages), who gets to the root of the media's obsession with the "religious right." As for the incorrigibles, they are dealt with on page 58 by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr., in a review of David Brock's sensational *The Real Anita Hill* (at this writing, No. 2 on the *Washington Post* bestseller list, No. 3 on the *New York Times*), a book that demolishes the last of the great liberal lies and whose every paragraph is a revelation.

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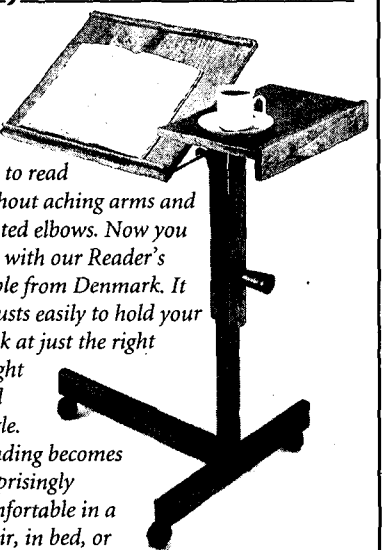

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Are You Too Smart to Dismiss Old Screwtape?

Mark Twain said he didn't believe in Hell but was afraid he'd go there. Isn't that a problem with atheism and all those godless "isms" — Freudianism, hedonism, Marxism, etc. — that have fascinated apparently intelligent people? You just can't be sure there isn't a God, a Judgment, a Devil, and a Hell.

But isn't all that Heaven-and-Hell stuff a crutch for wimps and neurotics, an insult to one's intelligence?

Actually, there's a revival of interest in religion going on among the intelligentsia. And why not? Intellectuals have bought into every panacea and quack remedy to come down the pike, and are running out of substitutes for the Real Thing. Ostensibly bright people have pooh-poohed Hell, liberated themselves from morality, turned themselves into pooh-bahs, and created a Hell on earth for everyone else. Perhaps it's true that the Devil's cleverest wile is to convince us he doesn't exist.

We at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW are spearheading today's intellectual engagement with the Ultimate Questions. Among other things, we scrutinize the religious dimensions of the great events and issues of the past and present, and probe the wisdom offered not only by the Bible and Church fathers, but also by such giants as St. Francis, Aquinas, Kierkegaard, Newman, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Barth, Niebuhr, Buber, Auden, Eliot, Waugh, Chesterton, Hopkins, Dawson, Silone, Maritain, Mauriac, Bernanos, Solzhenitsyn, Muggeridge, Schumacher, von Balthasar, de Lubac, Thomas More, Dorothy Day, Flannery O'Connor, Mother Teresa, Archbishop Romero, and Pope John Paul II. Not to mention Dante and C.S. Lewis.

An ecumenical monthly edited by lay Catholics, we've been characterized by George Will as "splendid," by *Newsweek* as "cheeky" (it takes cheek to mention Hell!), by *National Review* as "first-rate," by *Library Journal* as "brilliant," by the eminent evangelical theologian Carl F.H. Henry as "exceedingly well done," and by Christopher Derrick, England's foremost Catholic apologist and a pupil and long-time friend of C.S. Lewis, as "by far the best Catholic magazine in the English-speaking world." Frankly, we're "influential," to quote the *Los Angeles Times*.

We publish Protestants, Catholics, Anglicans, Eastern Orthodox, Jews, and an occasional nonbeliever. Writers who've appeared in our pages include such diversely penetrating intellects as Walker Percy, Robert Bellah, Christopher Lasch, Thomas Molnar, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Daniel Bell, L. Brent Bozell, Robert Coles, John Lukacs, Richard Mouw, Avery Dulles, Sheldon Vanauken, Peter Kreeft, and John Warwick Montgomery. We cover a wide range of issues, including the quest for a more just and humane world, but refuse to subordinate the faith to political ideology.

Whether or not you're Catholic, if you're too smart to dismiss old Screwtape and the Lowerarchy, give us a try!

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Angels on Broadway, by Yale Kramer 18

Tony Kushner's marathon gay drama, Angels in America, *may have won the Pulitzer this year, but it's short on universal themes and long on propaganda. What it shows despite itself is that the gay-rights movement is about far more than sexual orientation.*

Russia Votes Yes, by Cathy Young 26

But it also voted no.

Time of Troubles, by Adrian Karatnycky 28

Washington take note: Russian revanchism is being countered by Ukraine's democratic evolution.

Wealth and Poverty Revisited, by George Gilder 32

The author of a Reagan-era classic finds that his arguments have taken on new meaning in the slavishly statist Clinton interregnum.

Cover illustration by B.A. Friedman. Interior art by Jake Tapper, John Springs and B.A. Friedman.

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• May—and happy days are here again: Mr. Rush Limbaugh's capitalistic exhortations turned out 35,000 decent Americans to Mr. Dan Kay's bake sale in Fort Collins, Colorado. Mr. Kay can now pay for *The Limbaugh Letter*. He had complained to Mr. Limbaugh over the radio weeks before that he could not afford the price. Rather than "turn him [Mr. Kay] into a ward of the show, dependent on the show for his life and happiness," Mr. Limbaugh suggested the bake sale, and people came from as far away as the United Kingdom. During his appearance in Fort Collins, Mr. Limbaugh declared: "This, today, is a microcosm of what could be happening all over the country if we had the right kind of leadership." And back in Washington an ABC poll registered for our president the lowest rating of approval (46 percent) and the highest rating of disapproval (48 percent) for any president at this stage of his presidency. Things will get worse!

• There is a remedy for the United States Postal Service and its thousands of slow-moving, elephantine cargo carriers who lumber so painfully to our doors: stuffing Mr. Fred Fna's mail into Mrs. Ethel Amplebottom's box and Mrs. Amplebottom's into the Fittlesins' newspaper tube, and completely mistaking the pink flamingo on the Mussolinis' front lawn for their pit bull and so macing the dreadful *objet d'art* just before backing over the Chittleson's cat. The remedy is to be found in Thailand. There, government efficiency experts, according to Bangkok's mass-circulation newspaper *Thai Rath*, have sped up their traditional communications systems by feeding amphetamines to thirty elephants. Thai animal protection officials are distraught because many of the elephants appear to have become amphetamine addicts, but surely the average American postal worker would not object to this innovation and some might even welcome another petty vice into their collection. A presentiment of the government levy that awaited the Rev. David Koresh had he survived last month's notorious fire was provided on May 3, when Idaho filed suit against Mr. and Mrs. Frederick C. Howard in Scranton, Pennsylvania. The Howards, aged 67 and 70 respectively, are the Pennsylvania couple whose cross-country automobile vacation was abruptly terminated after a flat-tire on their vehicle sparked a conflagration in the dry grass lining an Idaho roadway. The fire required the services of hundreds of firefighters, and now Idaho is suing the Howards for over $1 million. President Clinton decided to send troops and offensive aircraft to Bosnia, then only aircraft, then only Warren Christopher, whose initials provoke such hilarity among the French. Then the populist president shut down two of Los Angeles International Airport's four runways, delayed thirty-seven flights costing the carriers $76,479, while a ludicrous Hollywood coiffeur trimmed his frizz for fifty-six minutes at the cost of $200.

• Thailand is not the only country with exemplary solutions for our social problems. As mild weather returns to the North American continent, fresh hordes of homeless are obstructing the sidewalks of major American metropolises with their beggar's cups and plangent solicitations, all interlarded with the rhetoric heard at past Democratic national conventions and with the sort of sociological gibbering that leaps from the mouth of the fair Hillary and bellyflops so rudely. Now from progressive Kuala Lumpur comes the solution to this vexed problem. The Kuantan Municipal Council is hiring aborigines to train its staff in the use of blowpipes equipped with tranquilizers for stunning the city's multitudes of stray dogs. Here then is a humane expedient for eliminating street pests and one that is not without its sporting element. The sedated dogs of Kuala Lumpur are ultimately destroyed by the local Veterinary Services Department, but Americans need not stoop to such barbarism. Here there are many openings on college faculties where America's homeless might raise the intellectual tone of campus life and at places like the University of Pennsylvania perhaps even raise the level of hygiene among the primitive professoriate. New York Senator Alfonse D'Amato's brother was convicted of mail fraud, and Alabama's former governor Mr. Guy Hunt was fined and sentenced to community service stemming from his fraud conviction. And, after $5,500 of artificial breasts were stolen from a store in Boca, Florida, police spokeswoman Miss Sonya Friedman theorized that the heist was the work of a transvestite ring that also hit a nearby dress shop—recall if you will, Miss Friedman, that the critic Mr. George Jean Nathan once noted that women have dirtier minds than men.

• President Boris Yeltsin and his program of democratic capitalism were the targets of violent street demonstrations by opponents whose visions of managed health care and industrial policy put one in mind of nothing so much as the works of the weird Mr. Ira Magaziner and the ubiquitous Mr. Robert Reich. Back in the United States, there was evidence that the federal government does at least one thing right: the nation's prison population has reached an all-time high and the number of miscreants jugged by the federal prison system rose significantly faster than that of the states. Good going, fellows! A Long Island woman, Miss Lynn Wult, 33, an inspector for the Suffolk County Consumers Affairs Department, opened a can of mushrooms purchased by her at the First National Food Market Inc. and discovered, amid the delicate stems, a human finger. It was a purchase that she had not intended, going, as it does, against all her ethical and dietary principles; and so she is suing the food store and Giorgio Foods of Temple, Pennsylvania, for $15 million. That is a bit over the top, Miss Suffolk County Consumer Affairs Inspector, even if the unwanted discov-

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ery did cause you to scream, throw up, and suffer a recrudescence of an old eating disorder that now requires therapy.

• In Ithaca, New York, Cornell University President Frank H.T. Rhodes obdurately stood in history's path and shouted "Stop!" He has vetoed a student government proposal to set aside sixty rooms for the campus's militant homosexuals at historic Clara Dickson Hall, perhaps after renaming it Rock Hudson Hall or Liberace Hall or simply Himmler Hall. The president's action may, indeed, have been stimulated by a wholesome reactionary streak, but it could have been stimulated by a progressive impulse. Possibly he noted the obvious sexual proclivities of the students around him and feared that those sixty rooms at old Clara Dickson Hall would be frightfully overcrowded. From Lyon, France, comes word that it is going to be even more convenient for Frenchmen to become blind drunk. The prestigious wine-maker, M. Daniel Michaud, is placing new labels on his Beaujolais and they will be in Braille. A report by Dr. Majaz Moonis to the annual meeting of the American Academy of Neurology suggests that a mishap suffered a year ago by an unnamed 46-year-old Massachusetts man may allow a significant advance in the teaching of foreign languages to American students. Historically our students have acquired foreign language skills only with the utmost difficulty; but now Dr. Moonis's rediscovery of Foreign Accent Syndrome (FAS) provides hope for these dolts. According to this accomplished neurologist, the aforementioned unnamed gentleman acquired a French accent after walking away from a serious automobile accident. He had never studied French and in point of fact never even traveled farther from his Worcester, Massachusetts home than a brief fling in New Jersey. Now Dr. Moonis has discovered some two dozen cases of FAS in the scientific literature, and if he can just find enough daring students with autos he can start a serious experiment in teaching foreign languages. Doubtless President Clinton's Department of Transportation will provide the requisite government grant.

• In Kuwait, investigators have turned up evidence that during former President Bush's recent visit agents of Iraq's President Saddam Hussein attempted to do him in. In Portland, Oregon, Mr. Anthony Roberts can be grateful that he has such a small brain. During his initiation rites into an outdoor group called Mountain Men Anonymous, an associate of Mr. Roberts missed while attempting to shoot an arrow through a can atop Mr. Roberts's head and pierced his skull, damaging his eye but leaving his comparatively minuscule brain almost fully intact. The Associated Press has provided a useful clarification as to why a pig was found in the casket of Mrs. Mimi Lazarus Goldberg of Honolulu, Hawaii. The casket was being sent from Honolulu to Oakland, California, by the widely respected Nuuanu Mortuary and apparently the pig, which had been placed in a bag for disposal, was mistaken by an embalmer for Mrs. Goldberg's personal effects. Needless to say, the Goldbergs' lawyers are cleaning up. Finally, the following notice has been sent to all faculty members of Elizabethtown College in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania: "On May 2, 1993, at about 1:10 p.m. near the baseball field, two female students were subjected to indecent assault when an unknown male grabbed their breasts and ran off." At this writing the booty has yet to be recovered.

—RET

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U.S. News Clears Thomas of Sexual Harassment Charges

In your recent excerpt from David Brock's new book, *The Real Anita Hill* ("The Other Anita Hill," *TAS*, May 1993), there was an error involving a cited article from *U.S. News & World Report*.

In footnote 3 in the excerpt, Mr. Brock writes that in our October 12, 1992 issue, we mischaracterized Angela Wright's charge against Thomas and "claimed that a third sexual harassment charge had been lodged against Thomas by Sukari Hardnett. This was also false."

In fact, we did not report that Ms. Wright charged Thomas with harassment but rather that she had been the target of Thomas's "unwanted sexual advances." This was an accurate characterization of Ms. Wright's point, and Mr. Brock offers no fact or specific to indicate otherwise. Regarding Hardnett, the magazine did not report that Hardnett charged Thomas with sexual harassment. Instead, we said that she had reported "sexual comments" by Thomas. In a letter to the Senate Judiciary Committee dated October 13, 1991, Hardnett described her view of how various female employees of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under Clarence Thomas were treated as objects of "sexual interest."

While we appreciate Mr. Brock's crediting *U.S. News* with parts of the Hill-Thomas story that we reported first, we do not want our work to be mischaracterized.

—Kathryn Bushkin
Director of Editorial Administration
U.S. News & World Report
Washington, D.C.

David Brock replies:

Contrary to Kathryn Bushkin's assertion, I never wrote that *U.S. News* reported that Angela Wright charged Thomas with harassment; I merely said that the magazine had "mischaracterized" Wright's charge. By this I mean that—having had access to the Wright transcript—*U.S. News* chose not to report the crucial exchange in which Wright said she was *not* charging Thomas with harassment. This omission, together with the description of Wright's charge as constituting "unwanted sexual advances" (a description that does not comport with my reading of the Wright statement), created the unmistakable impression that had she testified, Wright would have provided evidence of a pattern of sexual harassment by Thomas. This impression is false.

With regard to Sukari Hardnett, Bushkin is splitting hairs as well. I stand by my assertion that the magazine mischaracterized the Hardnett statement, which contained this unreported sentence: "I am not claiming that I was the victim of sexual harassment." By quoting the Hardnett statement in the context of reporting—with no substantiation—that other women had allegedly failed to come forward against Thomas at the time of the hearings, the magazine again created the false impression that there were women other than Hill who had been harassed by Thomas.

Bushkin now emphasizes that the comments reported by Hardnett were not even Hardnett's own, but from other unnamed parties. In other words, these comments were little more than idle gossip. In my book, I write that *U.S. News* was part of a "revisionist tilt" towards believing Anita Hill and disbelieving Clarence Thomas. Is the magazine now tilting the other way?

London Scores

I'd like to commend Herbert London on his wonderfully insightful article "The Permissive Right" (*TAS*, May 1993). It's about time someone made the case that fiscal responsibility is inextricably tied to social responsibility. . . .

Living in Massachusetts, I have many friends who are charter members of the "Permissive Right." I decided to give London's article to a self-described "Weld Republican" (and a charter member) for his perusal. What I received back from him, in the form of a memo, typifies the response from this group when they are unexpectedly confronted with the light of truth:

> If this article is your idea of an erudite and insightful discussion of socio-economic matters, I am ashamed and embarrassed for you.
>
> Please don't waste my time with this tripe. I know you're capable of exchanging ideas on a much higher plane than this sop for the uncomprehending conservative masses/blind followers (now 76 bodies less in Waco, Texas).

Thank you, *TAS*, for your beacon of light in all this liberal fog!

—Joseph J. Landino, Jr.
Lexington, Massachusetts

Herbert London is exactly right that widespread vice is undermining our standard of living. But the vices in question are not fostered by capitalist institutions, as he seems to imply. Several property, strict liability, insurance sanctions, and the discipline of competition naturally reward temperance, enterprise, and thrift, and penalize licentiousness, sloth, and waste.

In contrast, the disincentives of the welfare state penalize virtue and subsidize vice. Coerced transfers of property from the productive to the destructive elements of society undermine not only our economy but the moral foundations of civilization. Conservatives should seek not to speed up the process by further infringing rights, but to reverse it by restoring responsibility.

—Mark La Rochelle
Bethesda, Maryland

Governor Weld is on the right track, while Herbert London is lost in a switching yard. It is as impossible for a government to effectively control the personal lives of its citizens as it is impossible for it to plan and direct the economy.

The government has no business reaching into our pockets to redistribute wealth in accordance with some liberal/socialist scheme of fairness. Equally, it has no business stepping into our bedrooms to enforce some conservative concept of morality.

London correctly recognizes that the welfare state is largely responsible for encouraging impoverishing behavior such as the profusion of illegitimate children, yet he seems to believe the same

(continued on page 69)

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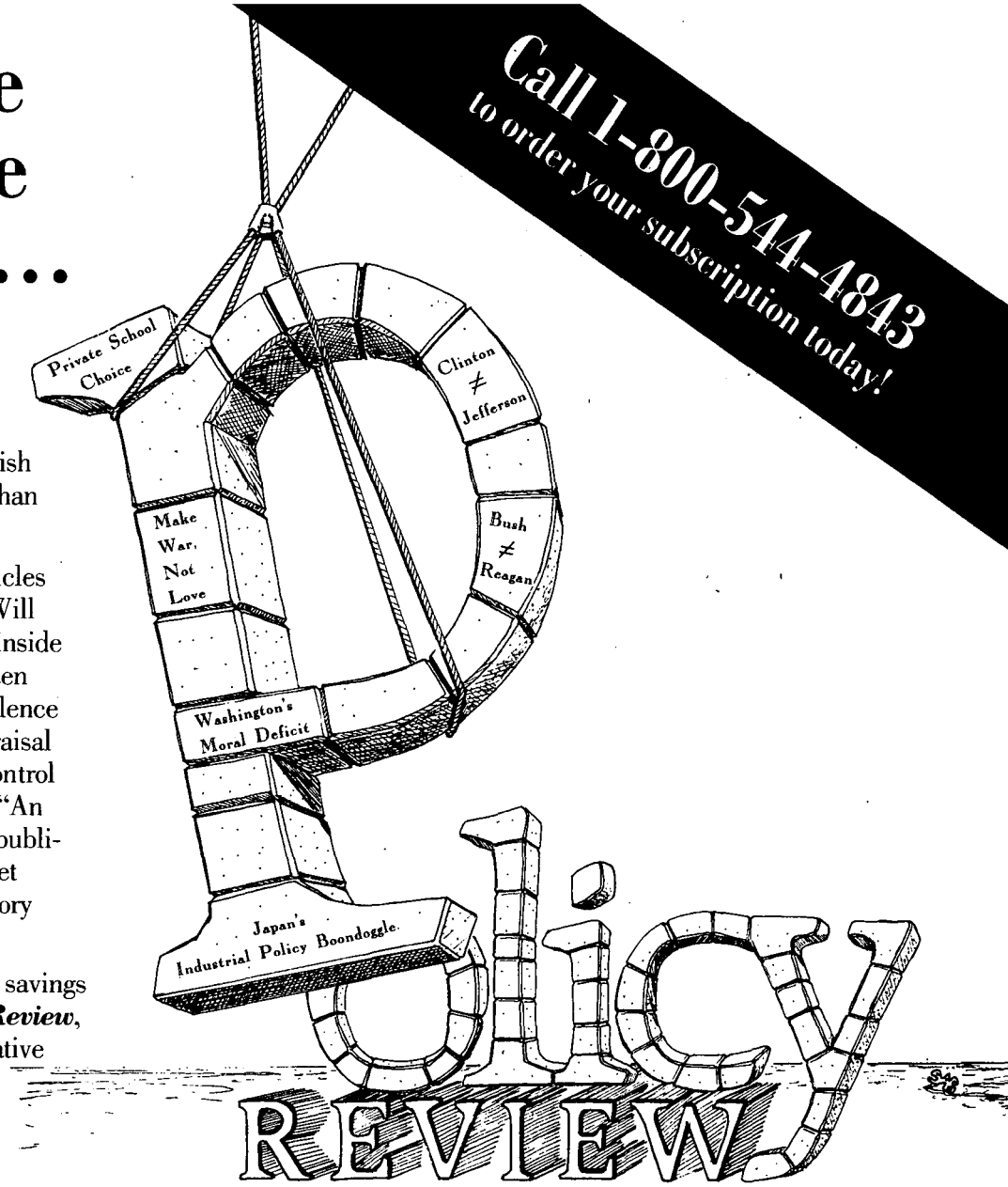

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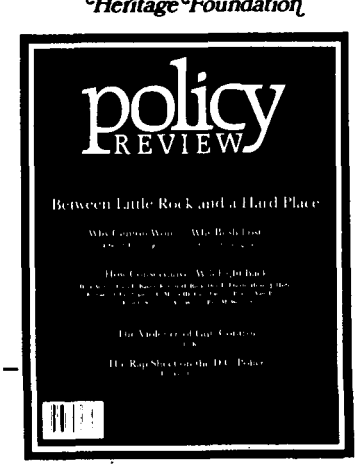

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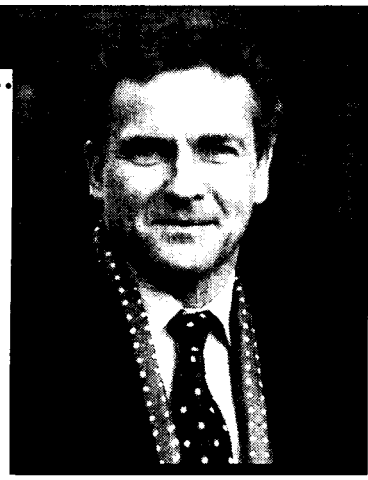

Coat-and-Tie Radicals

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

I agree with Hillary and Chelsea and Socks and all the other quaintly named boosters of our president. All around the White House the Best and the Brightest of the Republic's last two generations are asking this question: "Why now are so many voices up in arms"—that's the way these hinds talk!—"against the president?"

There was no clamor of protest when, during the campaign, Bill Clinton said the economy was in a state of "depression" or "the worst economy in fifty years." There was no protest when he disparaged the ethics of the Reagan-Bush administrations as being uniquely scandalous. He has depicted a health-care system that is probably the world's best as one of the advanced countries worst and never faced catcalls. He has broken a dozen campaign promises and never been hooted down. At his recent press conference, he asserted that in every year of the Reagan-Bush era conditions worsened. No one at the press conference picked on him for that or even politely inquired as to why, if things were worsening, the Republicans were repeatedly re-elected.

Bill Clinton has been speaking out of both sides of his mouth for years and there have been few objections. Hillary is equally fluent in double-talk. *In flagrante* she has moved from being simply Mrs. Clinton, wife and mother, to being Ms. Hillary Rodham Clinton, careerist and policy mullah. Now she is pontificating New Age flapdoodle at college commencement exercises where most of the profs are too inane to object, though surely some bright students and alumni must recognize the gibberish. Now, after years of discrediting bourgeois values, she is presenting herself as a moralist. She has actively participated in multitudes of liberal causes, yet in *Parade* magazine she tells us she is "conservative in the true sense of the word." That line has a familiar ring. A subgroup of 1960s youth has always had a knack for being on both sides of most issues.

Bill and Hillary are, truth be known, splendid examples of that subgroup of 1960s youth that has, ever since the great days of protest and soapboxes, pretty much had things its own way. In the 1960s those of us who snickered at their phoniness called them "coat and tie" radicals. They would polish apples for the prof, go just as far to the left as the prof would approve, moonlight on the counterculture for its lewd entertainments; but always they would turn up prim and purring when jobs and preferment were handed out. For a quarter of a century these frauds have been advancing themselves at universities, government bureaucracies, think tanks, law offices, and those corporate boardrooms befogged in the *Kultursmog* of the coat-and-tie left.

They are the spoiled brats of their generation, and they have not a hint as to what is amiss with shutting down half of Los Angeles International Airport's runways so that a $200 haircut can be administered to one of their selfless advocates of the Noble Cause—any noble cause. All the policies they advocate are pretty much the policies they and their mentors advocated in years gone by. Sometimes they have changed the names. Socialized medicine is "national health care." Social engineering is "community building." Quotas are "goals." Aloof in the *Kultursmog* they rarely encounter critics. When they do the critics are dismissed as

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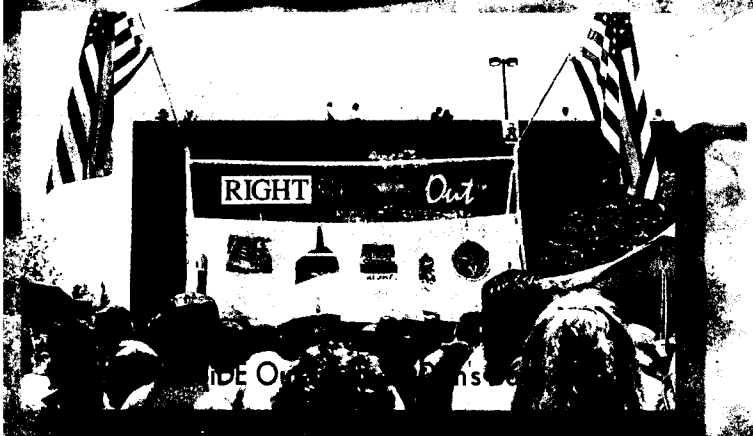

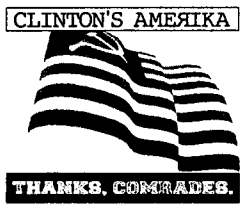

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racists, male chauvinists, ideologues, ultraconservatives.

Thus a vast flabbiness has overtaken these poseurs. They are indeed usually thumping for the same policies they thumped for in their youth, but no longer do they talk of socialized medicine or welfare with the crisp scholarliness of their mentors from yesteryear, nor are they really intent on reform; that might mean reforming themselves, which is impossible.

As the New Democrat in the White House has proven with his increasingly left-wing appointments, 1960s coat-and-tie radicals (much like late-eighteenth-century French Bourbons) learn nothing from the passage of time. They are double-talkers today, but they have always been double-talkers. They respond purely to their own delusions. They believe Americans are eager for tax increases, for national health care, for an America as efficient as the Post Office. As their critics multiply, an amusing perplexity is going to come over them. They will not wise up. ❐

Botching Bosnia

The other day, when reports began to come in that Muslims and Croats were fighting in Mostar, I was at first alarmed. I have friends there. I visited the Herzegovinian city twice last fall, first to review the condition of refugees in the area, and later to distribute supplies with Ted Forstmann, the American entrepreneur who had procured them. Then I grew curious. The news was reporting that the city's Croats were fighting the city's Muslims. But when I was in Mostar there were no Muslims, at least not many. What has happened?

When I was in Mostar we were constantly under random bombardment from Serb artillerymen guzzling slivovitz and generally having a grand old time high in the hills that surround the city. Today's news reports describe the city as having a population of 125,000. The actual figure was half that when I was there, and the city was a shambles. Serb artillery had gutted homes, hospitals, schools, office buildings, churches, and mosques. Half of the city's original 125,000 population was dead or in refugee camps. Once an elegant Italianate city, Mostar was now an armed ruin, eight of its nine bridges destroyed, its parks turned into cemeteries with fresh graves marked by Christian and Muslim gravestones alike. The leader of the Croatian militia that governed the city, Jadran Topic, formerly a soccer player for the New York Cosmos, commanded a mixed force dominated by Croats but with a much smaller contingent of Muslims. Most Muslims were dead or departed.

So these Muslims now fighting Topic, where have they come from? The Muslims who were in Mostar when I was there would be no match for him. My sources tell me that a few months ago the president of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Alija Izetbegovic, began sending some 35,000 Muslims from eastern Bosnia into the area as provocateurs and to repopulate the city so that it will qualify as Muslim territory during future negotiations. Many have been armed by Serbian forces whose artillery positions have been

under pressure from the Croats for months. I get other reports that those opposing the Croats are really Serbs claiming to be Muslims. Are my sources sound? I do not know, but I am certain that the news reports are inaccurate, and that Bosnia-Herzegovina is a complex chowder.

The modern American habit of mind is to ignore history and to see people as infinitely pliable. President Clinton is now planning vast diplomatic schemes and even a number of military ventures to tranquilize the historically chaotic and bloody Balkans. It would be better for us all if he had more respect for history, his and the Balkans'. President Bill Clinton's history is that of an anti-military idealist. His antipathy for the military has been repeatedly evinced, from his extraordinary attempts to avoid military service in his youth to the insouciance he has shown toward military traditions and practices since his inauguration. Despite the advice of a presidential commission he has ordered that women serve in combat. And he has attempted to lift the military ban against homosexuals. He is cutting the military budget by far more than was his campaign promise. He has frozen military pay and ordered that future pay raises be beneath those of the private sector. Now he is talking not only about air strikes against bellicose Serbs but also about sending in ground forces. This is his Wilsonian idealism acting up.

Were he respectful of history he might recognize that the confused values he embodies brought us to Vietnam. Moreover, it was the idealistic civilians who were the first to cut from Vietnam, leaving the military and the hawks to fulfill our diplomatic and geopolitical responsibilities. History, geography, military science, and present political conditions worldwide suggest that the Balkans are no place for any American ground troops. The American people are not ready, the Europeans are not, President Yeltsin is not; and American forces should only be sent to conquer, not to serve as peace-keeping targets.

Beginning last summer it was increasingly clear that aerial destruction of Serb strongman Slobodan Milosevic's army and artillery was feasible and desirable. Late last April General Merrill McPeak, head of the Air Force, testified before the Senate, "Give us time and we will order strikes on every one of those artillery positions and put it out of business." Retired General Michael Duggan, who was Air Force chief of staff at the outset of the Gulf War, is even more optimistic on the efficacy of air power. Yet President Clinton alternately bungles his diplomatic openings to the Europeans and rattles sabers—the wrong sabers. History tells us his performance will get worse. ❐

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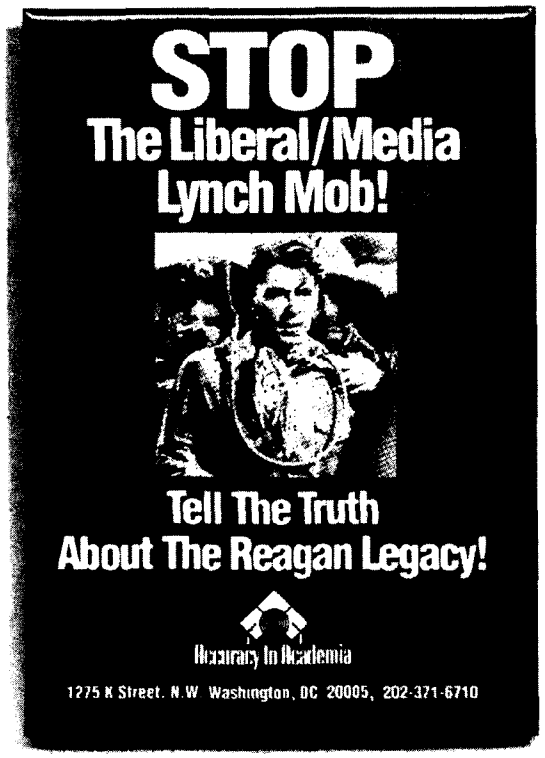
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Culture War II

by Tom Bethell

Patrick Buchanan has a new organization called the American Cause, whose supporters recently convened at the Shoreham Hotel in Washington. The topic was "Winning the Culture War." Ever since his speech to the Republican Convention last August, when he said that we are in a cultural war, Buchanan has become identified with the controversy surrounding this hard-to-define thing called "the culture." Politically, it is something of a novelty. In the press conference that Buchanan held when he entered the Republican primaries eighteen months ago, "the culture" was not mentioned.

Buchanan's remarks at Houston were subsequently attacked with the ferocity that liberals cannot hide when their most treasured beliefs are questioned. "What do you mean by culture?" Mario Cuomo asked on "Face the Nation." "That's a word they used in Nazi Germany." On "Inside Washington" Carl Rowan said that Buchanan's remarks were the closest he had ever heard to a Nazi address. Some of you may be trying to recall what it was that Buchanan said to provoke such outbursts. First, he made some comments on "the agenda Clinton & Clinton would impose on America—abortion on demand, a litmus test for the Supreme Court, homosexual rights, discrimination against religious schools, women in combat," which he lumped together as "radical feminism." (He missed gays in the military, by the way.) Then, a few paragraphs later, he said this:

> My friends, this election is about much more than who gets what. It is about who we are. It is about what we believe, it is about what we stand for as Americans. There is a religious war going on in our country for the soul of America. It is a cultural war, as critical to the kind of nation we will one day be as was the Cold War itself. And in that struggle for the soul of America, Clinton & Clinton are on the other side, and George Bush is on our side.

Pretty heavy stuff, huh? Does the reference to Clinton & Clinton seem so exaggerated now? What was it that got the left so upset? In many quarters, Buchanan was immediately attacked for declaring a war, when he merely said we were in one. To some extent even this was exaggerated. Conservatives have been so devoid of leadership that there has been almost no resistance to the leftist onslaught. The bishops have remained pathetically mute, or have cravenly joined the opposition, confining their sermons to the safe topic of social justice. Republicans in general have showed no inclination to put up a fight on this front. President Bush, as Buchanan said, was "on our side," but like almost the entire Republican leadership he was uncomfortable with the idea that there *is* such a thing as a cultural war. He certainly was not disposed to lead one side against another. Nor was Ronald Reagan (although, unlike Bush, he was politically astute enough to know what it took to get re-elected).

A few months after the Republican convention Irving Kristol wrote in the *Wall Street Journal*, with uncharacteristic pessimism: "I regret to inform Pat Buchanan that those wars are over and the left has won." This was partly right, but Kristol might have added that the left had won by default. The best way to fight a war is to fool the opposition into thinking there is no war. And the liberals (as the left is usually called in America) have been very good at that deception. So of course they didn't like it when Buchanan came along with his belated wake-up call. The howls from Cuomo, Rowan, and others told us that they knew perfectly well what was going on.

"The culture" really refers to a widely held set of beliefs about the purpose of life and the way in which society should be organized as a consequence. Those beliefs, in the U.S. as in the West generally, were for a long time broadly Judeo-Christian. Those who did not share these underlying religious beliefs were nonetheless for the most part willing to assent to them, and to accept the resulting framework of law and custom: abortion is wrong and should be illegal, homosexual behavior is shameful and should be frowned on, at best closeted; sexual intercourse should await matrimony and thereafter be confined to one's spouse, and so on.

All those beliefs have for a long time been under attack and have now been very widely discarded. Laws have been changed to reflect the new "reality." The results of abandoning the old culture are now apparent in the gay bathhouses and the AIDS wards, in the addiction treatment centers, in the crumbling inner cities, in the street gangs of the underclass, in the abortion clinics, in the high-school clinics that distribute condoms and Norplant, in the welfare offices, in the public housing projects, in the crime and illegitimacy rates, and most recently in the activities of the serial killer from Michigan, Jack Kevorkian. (Buchanan calls him "a disgrace to medicine who belongs in a padded cell or a prison dorm with the convicted killer whose vital organs this defrocked quack was once so anxious to collect.")

An important part of the left's agenda now is to attribute this mounting patholo-

Tom Bethell is The American Spectator*'s Washington correspondent.*

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gy not to the collapse of an old culture and its replacement by a new one, but to persistent middle class wickedness: to racism, greed, prejudice, homophobia, sexism, selfishness, indifference to the suffering of mankind, and a stubborn unwillingness to pay higher taxes to alleviate that suffering. The discovery and dissemination of these sins is now the routine activity of journalists. It is what Peter Jennings, Dan Rather, and Tom Brokaw basically do for a living.

Because the new culture that the left seeks to impose on us is godless, it is also egalitarian. Three of the "four last things" having been discarded—judgment, heaven, and hell (socialism has not yet been able to triumph over the fourth, death, although that triumph, too, was once anticipated)—the socialist conscience insists that we all be as equal as possible in this one and only life. Anything else would be horribly unfair. Absent judgment in the hereafter, social justice must be vengefully pursued right now. The rich must be imprisoned, the poor liberated, and so on.

The extent to which we now live in a society that is dominated by leftist values is scarcely recognizable by politicians. Republicans still don't get it. The people are beginning to, however, with a little help from Pat Buchanan and Rush Limbaugh, and even more from Clinton & Clinton. Having been released from the confines of Arkansas, Mr. Clinton seems to think of his new constituents as dwelling in Manhattan, Cambridge, and Berkeley, with not much in between. Gays in the military? The people would soon recognize the justice of "extending civil rights" to this oppressed minority. New taxes? Here was a "change of direction" that the people would applaud, once they saw the wisdom of repudiating "twelve years of trickle-down economics." Clinton seems to believe quite sincerely that Reagan was an unpopular president.

How to explain not just his erroneous judgment, but the confidence with which he has asserted it? Jimmy Carter at least had the grace to come to Washington with a certain humility. The answer surely is that Clinton has spent his entire adult life hobnobbing with friends on the left; he recognizes their influence but finds it hard to accept that their policies, which involve further centralizing power, can be unpopular with the people. (On the other hand, his vague appeal to "change," meaning leftward movement, suggests he knows honesty is not the best policy.)

Meanwhile, Republican politicians have hardly dared to fight the left on moral terrain. Their opposition is always pragmatic. There was a moment of real resistance to the left at the time of Reagan's election, embodied in the supply-side, anti-tax movement. The argument was couched purely in terms of efficiency: "If we cut tax rates the producers will produce more goods. That will generate more revenues to distribute to the needy." Even this modest argument stirred up tremendous ideological hostility. The left was dismayed to see the notion of incentives—the intractability of human nature—reintroduced into public discourse. The tax changes were then opposed on moral grounds: they would reward greed, hurt the poor. As far as I know, they were never defended on moral grounds: allowing people to keep the money they have earned is simple justice, and is resisted by those who are base enough to traffic in envy and slander.

It makes one wonder what might happen if Republican pols dared take the moral offensive. In a recent column, Robert Bartley, the editor of the *Wall Street Journal*, discussed an angry response to an editorial the paper had published questioning the values of the "cultural elite." Bartley concluded that "it's one thing to question liberal economic policy, but quite another to question liberal moral leadership." Therein lies the opportunity. The corruption of liberal values has become so blatant that Republicans will ignore the issue at their peril in the future. Jack Kemp is a fine fellow, but things have reached a point where cutting the capital gains tax will not be sufficient to rescue us from decline. It was still possible in 1980 to finesse the cultural issues by advocating increased individual autonomy in the economic realm. By 1996, this will not be enough. The inroads of the nihilists are so great that they will have to be addressed in moral terms.

Buchanan will be more than happy to do this, but he is at the same time flirting with a serious error—economic protectionism. He wants to "save American jobs," but more likely will end up saving American trade unions. He sees that "the culture" is something more basic than the economy, and so, he seems to feel, if we can restore the culture, the economy will somehow take care of itself. An analogous point about the underclass has been made by Myron Magnet in his recent book *The Dream and the Nightmare* (reviewed in these pages last month by Tod Lindberg). The problem in the inner cities, Magnet suggests, is more fundamental than the unintended consequences of mere welfare payments.

Precisely because "the culture" is so basic, however, it is difficult to change at all, and impossible to change overnight. Welfare reform is at least a (remote) possibility. Likewise, the lesson of recent elections is that if you get the economy wrong, as Bush did, then you will lose no matter what your other positions may be. It is necessary to get it right, even if it is no longer sufficient to do so. Politically, advocating home-schooling (as Mary Kay Clark did at Buchanan's conference) and attacking the corruption of modern art cannot make up for economic errors that will make it more difficult to find employment.

One of the most interesting speeches at the conference was given by Bill Kristol, who was chief of staff to former Vice President Dan Quayle. The bad news, he said, is that the left now dominates virtually all the institutions in the country, and to an unprecedented degree: state and federal government, the universities, publishing houses, the mass media, and so on. The left's long march through these institutions has been "successfully completed."

The good news, he continued, is that the left today is in a position analogous to Soviet Communism a decade ago. It looks solid enough but its foundations are weak; it is going to collapse. "Even liberal elites have lost confidence in liberalism," Kristol said. Dan Quayle Was Right. Thirty years ago, liberals really believed that pouring cash into the inner cities was the solution to poverty. Few believe that now. Liberalism has degenerated from an honest belief to a hollowed-out, rotten shell; its institutions are defended more out of self-interest than conviction, its inner weakness disguised by blustery outbursts of fanaticism.

Let us hope Kristol is right. We are indeed in a war, as Buchanan said, and it can be won. But first it must be fought. The travails of Bill Clinton suggest that it may be easier than we think. ❐

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Angels on Broadway

Tony Kushner's marathon gay drama, Angels in America, *may have won the Pulitzer this year, but it's short on universal themes and long on propaganda. What it shows despite itself is that the gay-rights movement is about far more than sexual orientation.*

by Yale Kramer

Men, it has been well said, think in herds; it will be seen that they go mad in herds, while they recover their senses slowly, and one by one.

—Charles Mackay, LL.D. *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds*, 1852

From the love that dare not speak its name to the love that can't shut up—in barely twenty-five years. Gays march on Washington. Gays want to come out in the military. Gays parley with the president. Gays boycott Colorado. Gays protest the St. Patrick's Day parade. Gays want this. Gays demand that. Last winter the budget crisis and the Super Bowl took a backseat to *The Crying Game* at dinner tables in Georgetown and on Manhattan's Upper East Side. And now forget everything else!

"A most brilliant play," proclaimed Sir Ian McKellen to the Tony Awards audience last spring. "One of the greatest . . . as funny as it is profound," shouted *USA Today*. Frank Rich, guru of cultural New York, pronounced on the occasion of its opening in Los Angeles that Tony Kushner's two-part, seven-hour *Angels in America* had "created an original theatrical world" that "once entered by an open-minded viewer of any sexual or political persuasion, simply cannot be escaped."

This spring it won the Pulitzer Prize. Producers nearly shed blood amongst themselves over which of them would bankroll the play on Broadway. Rarely before have we seen the media in such a feeding frenzy. The *New Yorker*'s John Lahr practically swooned in ecstasy. "From its first beat, 'Angels in

Yale Kramer is a clinical professor of psychiatry at the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey.

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America' exhibited a ravishing command of its characters and of the discourse it wanted to have through them with our society." He ends his paean to the play in the mellifluous and reverential tones of an Addison DeWitt—that deliciously hypocritical maker-and-shaker of the theatrical world in *All About Eve*:

> Kushner and the excellent Taper ensemble had made a little piece of American theatre history on that cloudless California night. "Angels in America" was now officially in the world, covered more or less in glory. It was a victory for Kushner, for theatre, for the transforming power of the imagination to turn devastation into beauty.

The following issue of the *New Yorker* published a puff piece on Kushner himself that takes the words out of Kushner's mouth and turns them into the usual simplex *New Yorker* sociopolitical hash. "Kushner, however, did not set out to record the horror of AIDS alone but the horror of American life during the nineteen-eighties—the triumph of heartlessness and the withering of community."

Actually, if you avoid the media hyperbole and keep a clear head about it, *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes* turns out to be more interesting and more flawed than the official gatekeepers of our culture can acknowledge at the moment.

"Millennium Approaches," Part I of *Angels in America*, which opened in New York on May 4 at one of Broadway's largest theaters, does not—despite what they tell you at the box office—stand alone as a play. You will have to wait until next winter to find out the fate of its characters. The plot of Part I, though, is not difficult. There are three loosely connected subplots. Joe Pitt, a young Mormon lawyer, decent and honest, is working in New York as a law clerk for a federal court judge. He is also deeply unhappy in his marriage to Harper, a beautiful but flaky young woman addicted to tranquilizers. Apparently the problem is that Joe, a shy man, avoids sleeping with Harper and is struggling with homosexual inclinations and deeply conflicted about them.

Subplot number two, which by now everyone in America knows, consists of the infamous Roy Cohn trying to persuade the decent and honest Joe Pitt, for whom he has a soft spot, to leave his wife and go to Washington to work as a "Roy Boy" in Ed Meese's Department of Justice. Joe would be there, Cohn explains, to help protect Cohn against the enemies he believes he has in the white-shoe law firms trying to disbar him. In the middle of all this, Cohn discovers that he has AIDS and begins to show signs of mortality.

Subplot number two consists of the infamous Roy Cohn trying to persuade the decent and honest Joe Pitt to leave his wife and go to Washington to work as a "Roy Boy" in Ed Meese's Department of Justice.

Subplot number three is about two gay men in New York: Louis, a Jew; and Prior, a WASP. They have been living together for four years and apparently love each other. At the funeral of Louis's grandmother that begins the play, Prior tells Louis that he has AIDS. Louis struggles against but loses out to his fear of AIDS and leaves Prior to die alone. But his grief and guilt are not too great to prevent him from finding and seducing honest and decent Joe Pitt.

Part I ends on an indeterminate note: Harper is left in an hallucinatory Antarctica hoping for an Eskimo to come by; Joe is going off to Louis's apartment to taste gay sex for the first time; Roy Cohn is left writhing in pain on his living room rug as the ghost of Ethel Rosenberg returns to haunt him; and Prior is having hallucinatory nightmares in which he is visited by the Angel of Death.

Although the play is not profound, it is understandable that audiences find it dazzling. It was meant to leave the audience bewildered, to make us feel, at the end of it, like dumb hicks—straight, three-piece-suited, permanent-waved goyim. Kushner knows the difference between profundity and razzle-dazzle: he knows that a profound work of art results in a sense of illumination and clarity about the human condition, not "Wow, what does all this mean? It must be very deep." The razzle-dazzle is created by a combination of techniques serving no other function than to inspire awe and alienation.

There are thirty-two scenes in "Part I: Millennium Approaches," alternating back and forth between the three plots, thus allowing logical and chronological gaps and discontinuities to occur without the author having to account for them, and leaving us doubtful, on occasion, about what exactly is going on. These thirty-two scenes are, moreover, often played as split scenes—two scenes at either end of the stage going on at once or alternately.

Contributing to the confusion is the gratuitous and unexplained androgyny. The opening scene consists of a eulogy spoken by a very old rabbi with a long beard—played by a woman. What's going on? And later in the play, Roy Cohn's physician tells him he has AIDS: the physician, Henry, is played by a woman in drag. Why? Don't ask me.

We'll skip the rapid, overlapping speech, and the excessive length that prolongs the evening well past 11:30 (by which time our critical faculties have long since gone to bed). These contribute to the "brilliance" and tumult but are not important. What is important is the uncertainty and equivocation created by the pseudo-madness and ambivalence in the play. Many of the scenes are dream scenes, or frank hallucinations. Here are the stage directions for Scene 7:

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Mutual dream scene. Prior is at a fantastic makeup table, having a dream, applying the face. Harper is having a pill-induced hallucination. She has these from time to time. For some reason, Prior has appeared in this one. Or Harper has appeared in Prior's dream. It is bewildering.

Okay, we get the idea; we're not complete hicks. We know an analogical relationship when we see one. Though Prior and Harper have never met and don't even know of each other's existence, we perceive that they are both rejected lovers, victims of spiritual betrayal, she by her husband, he by his boyfriend. We also know that in the post-Freudian world of the theater, guys like Kushner like to put "higher" truths into the mouths of the insane or into the dreams or hallucinations of their characters, so that they can avow and disavow something at the same time. Both the responsibility for and the truth value of the revelation can remain in doubt. And Kushner is very good at this kind of ambiguous "truth" telling. He knows that audiences don't like to be lectured, as they are in some other plays about homosexuals currently running in New York.

Kushner is nothing if not clever at warding off resistance to his messages, and ambivalence is another technique he uses for this purpose—almost to a fault. Harper tells Joe she is going to have a baby:

JOE: Are you really?
HARPER: No. Yes. No. Yes. Get away from me.

Later in the play a black ex–drag queen accuses Louis of being a racist:

LOUIS: I am not a racist!
BELIZE: Oh come on . . .
LOUIS: So maybe I am a racist but . . .

Of course modern audiences have come to expect ambivalence. But it's one thing to acknowledge the ambivalence of the characters in the plays of Tennessee Williams or Arthur Miller, whose issues are personal and human-sized. It's quite another to try to understand the messages that come out of the mouths of Harper and Louis and Joe, whose concerns are with Justice and Love and Good and Bad and Politics and Society, and who are characters in a play whose subtitle is "A Gay Fantasia on National Themes."

The trouble is that between all the razzle-dazzle, the ambivalence, and the pseudo-madness it is hard to know what the characters, the playwright, and we ourselves believe by the end of the evening. We are, as the playwright wished us to be, bewildered. Intimidated, confused, impotent, and alienated from what is going on onstage—the way, Kushner wants us to believe, the gay man feels in America today.

What does being naughty mean? It means sexual transgression of any and all sorts. Whatever is unusual, abnormal, odd, shocking, scandalous, even frightful, becomes desirable, and the more the better.

Alienation is, indeed, one of the major themes of the play. The first scene, in which the old rabbi makes a funeral speech, sounds the tonic note of alienation—"how we struggled, and how we fought, for the family, for the Jewish home, so that you would not grow up here, in this strange place, in the melting pot where nothing melted." For Kushner, being a Jew is a metaphor for being gay.

On the surface, the play seems to be about the conflict between love and loyalty on the one hand and self-gratification on the other, between selflessness and doing your own thing. The post-Freudian homosexual ideal is to not go against your nature—to be true to your instincts. Two of the major figures in the play—Louis, the ambivalent Jewish intellectual; and Joe, the moral, upright lawyer trying to fight off his homosexual feelings—are faced with this conflict. Louis claims to love Prior, who needs him more than ever now that he is dying of AIDS, yet Louis runs away. He engages in much weeping and breast-beating over his faithlessness, but these have no apparent effect on his behavior. His suffering serves only to arouse him to betray Prior even more by seducing young Joe Pitt, who is wandering around looking to be seduced.

Joe's moral dilemma is whether to leave his helpless wife and come out of the closet—transgressing against the laws of his God and his parents but being true to his homosexual inclinations—or continue to be a good man "and learn to live dead, just numb."

All of the protagonists are deeply flawed and yet embody some redeeming quality that makes it possible for the audience to identify with them. It also makes it possible for the author to both accept and reject responsibility for some important truth that each of the characters utters. Louis, pathetically weak, childish, and cowardly, is also witty, and charmingly self-reproachful. Joe is timid, passive, and confused, but decent, kind, and good. Even Roy Cohn, who is meant to be demonic—which in Kushner's scheme is the same as Republican—demonstrates flashes of redeeming tenderness. But more important, what redeems him is his homosexuality—even though he hates homosexuals. In some sense Kushner is saying that no matter what evil Cohn committed in his life, the fact that he was a homosexual makes him worthy of redemption.

Cohn is certainly the most compelling character in the play. Like Satan in *Paradise Lost*, he has all the best lines; we listen to his blasphemies, his sophistries with

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fascination, half-believing them and admiring him. He stands for ruthlessness, lawlessness, raw power, and unbridled self. He redefines the essence of homosexuality, in one of the most interesting moments of the play, as impotence in the real world rather than sexual preference. Power, he says, is what defines a heterosexual man, not whether he "f---s around with guys." This may be self-delusion, but there is a grain of truth in what Cohn says, and Kushner knows it.

In fact, the moral dilemmas of Louis and Joe are clichés in the world of gay drama. Every so-called AIDS play—Robert Chesley's *Jerker*, William Hoffman's *As Is*, Larry Kramer's *The Normal Heart*—focuses on the issues of loyalty and fear of abandonment: Will you still love me and stay with me when I'm diseased, ugly, and dying? Should I stay with him when he's dangerous and no fun to be with? And the coming-out-of-the-closet dramas like *March of the Falsettos* all face similar issues of betrayal: Should I leave my wife and children, whom I love, and finally realize my true self, or do my duty to them and go on living a lie?

These moral issues don't seem like clichés in *Angels in America* because of all the theatrical tumult. Before you realize what is happening you are off to the next scene/subplot. And all those mystical moments—feathers falling out of nowhere inexplicably; the Book of Life suddenly appearing and disappearing in someone's vision; Prior's ancestors from past centuries appearing to him for some hard-to-understand purpose; and finally the pseudo-apocalyptic appearance of the Angel of Death in the final moments—the theater of the Fabulous, as Kushner calls it—make it easy to disguise the basically familiar plot structure.

What Kushner is good at besides theatrics is humor. The humor is mocking and self-mocking, some of it clever. Much of it is gay-oriented. Louis and Prior are both effeminate, and so do and say a lot of campy things that get laughs because some in the audience will recognize them as gay and thus get pleasure from seeing them onstage—the schlock of recognition, so to speak. The laughs depend more on performance or intonation than verbal wit. For example, Prior says, "Jewish curses are the worst. I personally would dissolve if anyone ever looked me in the eye and said 'Feh.'" This gets a very big laugh because of the intonation and exaggeration of the performance.

Though there is much hand-wringing, shouting, and weeping among the players, most of this is strangely unmoving. This is because the play is not about real people and the motives that drive the characters are not human motives, but the invented motives of an allegorist. The people onstage are symbols, or stereotypes—The Cold Strict Mother; The Ruthless Power-Mad Egomaniac; The Weak, Effeminate, Charming Gay. This is not immediately apparent because of Kushner's clever use of ambivalence to make his allegorical symbols appear more realistic and human than they really are. There is no one with whom we can empathize as we could with Albin, the drag queen in the film of *La Cage aux folles*, in his poignant moments of self-revelation. Where *La Cage aux folles* had no message and was about human feeling, *Angels in America* has more messages than Western Union and only bogus feelings that remain unshared by the straight audience.

The recognition of a sense of alienation as a social phenomenon goes back to Marx and Durkheim, and has been ascribed to many economic and political causes since then. And from the beginning of time many groups have been identified as alienated—the Christians because of their Roman persecutors, workers because of the grinding conditions imposed on them by the owners of the means of production, Jews because of the anti-Semitism of Christians, blacks because of the racism of whites, youth because of the oppressive values of adults. Now the spotlight has focused on homosexuals and their persecutors, the so-called homophobes.

In all of the gay plays currently on and off Broadway, the theme of alienation is central—as it is in *Angels in America*. Throughout the play images of alienation abound in the form of craziness, racism, anti-Semitism, and homophobia. In all of these, the victim's persecutor takes the form of the white male heterosexual Republican Establishmentarian. Prior says:

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People in a boat, waiting, terrified, while implacable, unsmiling men, irresistibly strong, seize . . . maybe the person next to you, maybe you, and with no warning at all, with time only for a quick intake of air you are pitched into the freezing, turbulent water and salt and darkness to drown.

The metaphor for AIDS and homosexuality is always the same—impotent, passive victims controlled, persecuted, and doomed by powerful men unsympathetic to their needs.

What Kushner cannot acknowledge—because his Broadway audience includes straights as well—other gay coterie plays *can* acknowledge because they don't worry about straight sensibilities. It is that the essence of alienation for gay men, or at least for the gay men who write plays, comes from the inner conflict they feel between what they really want and what the straight world can realistically give them.

It is foolish to suggest that there is only one set of gay values, one gay lifestyle. There are probably many—not an unlimited number, but at least several. There are some gay men who don't want to march in parades or protest. There are some who want to lead discreet sexual lives, like many heterosexual men. There are some who have had one or very few sexual partners in their lives. There may even be some who are not interested in gay theater. It is therefore best to generalize in a very limited way to those gay men who write plays and those gay men who applaud them. (Female homosexuality has vastly different behavioral patterns and psychological dynamics.) These men know that sex can have many meanings, can be used for self-punishment, revenge, hostility, humiliation, love, degradation, and for other psychological purposes as well. Louis, in a spasm of guilty self-punishment, goes into the park late at night, and finds an anonymous "butch" sadist.

Kushner rejects as unacceptable the view that it is possible for gays and straights to live together peacefully if gays exercise more self-restraint and straights exercise more tolerance.

MAN: What do you want?
LOUIS: I want you to f--- me, hurt me, make me bleed.

Many homosexuals like to define homosexuality publicly as the inherent need to love somebody of the same sex. Such a simple definition may be useful propaganda in the media or in congressional testimony but hardly even touches the more complex aspects of male homosexuality and its relationship to social and political forces.

On the evening of Good Friday, a few steps from the Perry Street Theatre in Greenwich Village where *The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me* is playing, you could see in the window of a gay sex shop a male mannequin wearing a pair of bulging jockey shorts and holding in one hand a couple of carrots and in the other a tube of K-Y jelly and a box of condoms. The sign above him read:

HAPPY EASTER
BE BAD
BUT BE SAFE

In front of the theater itself a sign announced:

THURSDAY NIGHT IS SINGLES NIGHT

YES I'M AVAILABLE
MAYBE, LET'S TALK
SORRY, I'M TAKEN

ASK FOR YOUR "SIGNAL TAG" AT THE TICKET BOOTH

Next to each choice on the sign was a colored circular adhesive "signal tag"—green for "Yes," yellow for "Maybe," red for "Sorry." It was as though life and art had become indistinguishable.

Despite the popular view of male homosexuality, sexual orientation is not the only socially relevant issue, or perhaps even the most important one. "Badness" is—or rather transgression.

Transgression is one of the most persistent themes in *Angels*. In Act Two, in the process of seducing Joe, Louis says: "Sometimes, even if it scares you to death, you have to be willing to break the law. Know what I mean?" A little later in the play Roy Cohn's parting words to his loved/hated protégé are, "Transgress a little, Joseph. There are so many laws; find one you can break." Throughout the play Cohn argues with force and fascination against submitting to the law. It becomes a principle of vitality in the play through Cohn's strength and persuasiveness.

JOE: Well it is unethical, I can't . . .
ROY: Boy you really are something, what the f--- do you think this is, Sunday School? . . . This is . . . this is gastric juices churning, this is enzymes and acids, this is intestinal is what this is, bowel movement and blood-red meat—this stinks, this is politics, Joe, the game of being alive. And you think you're . . . What? Above that? Above alive is what? Dead! In the clouds! You're on earth, goddammit! Plant a foot, stay awhile.

What fascinates Kushner about his reinvention of the myth of Roy Cohn is the equation of illegitimacy and power. You get power by cheating and conniving and manipulating—you get things on people or you fix their

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parking tickets and then they owe you something and that's clout. Kushner's Cohn is driven by the same basic sense of impotence that drives Louis and Prior and Joe and Harper—the feeling that if he had to go up against real men in legitimate combat he would have no hope of winning, that it is only through illegitimate means that he can win. (In Part II of the play, "Perestroika," Cohn is about to blackmail someone in order to get himself some AZT medicine and he says, "I'm no good at tests, Martin, I'd rather cheat.")

That is why the need to transgress against (straight men's) rules is so powerfully important. By being "bad," or, really, *naughty* (gay men don't want to do really bad things like murder or rape or rob) they can feel, in their heart of hearts, powerful, even a little triumphant over their oppressors—straight America.

What does being naughty mean? It means sexual transgression of any and all sorts. Whatever is unusual, abnormal, odd, shocking, scandalous, even frightful becomes desirable, and the more the better. The more shocking, the greater the dividend of personal power. Or rather, the less impotent, the less dead the shocker feels. It has to be in-your-face, by definition. And that is what is meant by the gay lifestyle.

The gay lifestyle is as important to some gay men, like Kushner, as sexual orientation is, or perhaps more important. Outing is part of that style, mockery and self-mockery is part of that style, and so, in some cases, is the provocation of punishment, as in Edward Albee's "Zoo Story," in which the gay man, Jerry, provokes an innocent bystander, Peter, to kill him. Kushner's is a gentler soul, but the play is full of mockery, self-mockery, and one or two shockers—the depiction of anal intercourse on a Broadway stage may be a first.

The gay lifestyle is what gay liberation was all about back in the seventies. And it is the discrepancy between the gay lifestyle and the straight lifestyle that is what the sense of alienation in gays is all about—not merely sexual preference. For Kushner, more than anything, freedom means freedom to transgress, to be naughty. Louis says to Joe, "Maybe the court won't convene. Ever again. Maybe we are free. To do whatever. Children of the new morning, criminal minds. Selfish and greedy and loveless and blind." Kushner uses these abstract allusions skillfully to conceal the more shocking meaning of freedom.

The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me, one of the gay plays running off-Broadway, has a terrifying scene called "12 Inches, Single" that depicts what it means to be free "to do whatever." The scene describes the frantic, feverish rush from one sexual partner to the next, performing all of the permutations and combinations that are possible with four openings and two penises. You go from bar to bar looking for the right dimensions, the right color, the right predilections. You comb the sex advertisements for the same attributes as though you were buying a piece of livestock. The scene is a bravura piece of performance art that illuminates this aspect of the gay life.

Another illustration of what Kushner only alludes to in order to make his hidden agenda more acceptable to his general audiences is to be found in *As Is*, by William Hoffman, a play produced several seasons ago. Rich and Saul, two gay men, are reminiscing about what it was like before AIDS took the liberation out of gay liberation:

> RICH: Remember Sunday afternoons blitzed on beer?
> SAUL: And suddenly it's Sunday night and you're getting f---ed in the second-floor window of the Hotel Christopher and you're being cheered on by a mob of hundreds of men. . . . God, I used to love promiscuous sex.
> RICH: Not "promiscuous," Saul, nondirective, noncommitted, nonauthoritarian—
> SAUL: Free, wild, rampant—
> RICH: Hot, sweaty, steamy, smelly—
> SAUL: Juicy, funky, hunky—
> RICH: Sex.
> SAUL: Sex. God I miss it.

What becomes clear from these plays is the degree of disingenuousness in press reports of testimony at congressional hearings to the effect that what is involved in the issue of gays in the military is sexual orientation and only sexual orientation. Even though the advent of gay liberation twenty-five or thirty years ago brought with it a demand for and realization of radical sexual freedom—which to this day remains a hall-

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mark of certain gay men, the kind of freedom that Louis in *Angels* still yearns for—it brought with it, too, conflict even among those it liberated. Did gay love, sexual partnership (in men) imply permanence? Fidelity? Commitment?

In *The Boys in the Band*, by Mart Crowley, produced in 1968 and now considered to be politically incorrect by some younger gays, the issue is clearly defined but ambiguously resolved. Hank has left his wife and children for a relationship with Larry. They have been lovers for two years, squabbling all of that time over the issue of fidelity. Hank now wants the rules of marriage to prevail, "till death do us part," but Larry, with a long history of sexual promiscuity, asserts his right to sexual freedom. In fact he wants Hank to be unfaithful, so that he can be free to follow his own impulses. Larry cynically asserts, "The ones who swear their undying fidelity are lying. Most of them anyway—ninety percent of them. They cheat on each other constantly and lie through their teeth. I'm sorry, I can't be like that."

AIDS, perforce, shifted the balance in the direction of stable monogamous relationships. Fidelity became an issue now not only for the sake of safe sex, but to deal with survivor guilt. How do you betray your partner and let him die alone and miserable? Once you begin to face that problem you're in big-time moral country. Honor, Commitment, Fidelity, Loyalty are those same nasty old straight, American, Mormon, conventional values Louis has been running away from. The ones that make you feel dead inside if you're a character in *Angels in America*. For Kushner, the choice is between the freedom to be sexually unbridled or to submit to the Oppressors: the Mormon Saints and Republican Fathers and their suffocating conventional values. His lifestyle or theirs.

The solution for him, as for many of the other current gay playwrights, is a magical solution, one that is wishful and self-serving and denies reality in a significant way. By turning to a vague mystical philosophy (which may seem profound to some) Kushner tries to resolve an irreconcilable psychological conflict. He rejects as unacceptable the view that it is possible for gays and straights to live together peacefully if gays exercise more self-restraint and straights exercise more tolerance.

In a *New Yorker* article last fall, Kushner described the revelation to his parents that he was gay:

> Soon after the phone call to his mother in 1981, Tony wrote his parents an angry letter. "I felt they had to acknowledge a parental failure. . . . Instead of looking at me and seeing what I was all about and trying to make a world in which I would be at home being who I was, they had chosen to make things comfortable for themselves. The way you give love is the most profoundly human part of you. When people say it's ugly or a perversion or an abomination, they're attacking the center of your being."

What Kushner and other gay theorists seem to do when it suits their rhetorical needs is to use the word "love" as a euphemism for sex, since no one considers the emotional component of love between men, such as the love between fathers and sons or close friends, to be perverse or ugly. What he means when he says "give love" in this case is have sex. And to refer to having sex as "profoundly human" is a little baffling. Having sex is the thing we have in common with all mammalian species. Conventionally what we mean when we use rhetorical phrases like "profoundly human" is the very opposite of having sex—what we usually mean is something that has to do with soul or spirit or mind rather than the genitals.

What is arguably the most perfectly constructed play ever written in the English language—The Importance of Being Earnest—*was written by a gay man, but it wasn't about gays, it was about all of us.*

Kushner went on:

> I said to them, "You can't love me without understanding that I'm gay. My being gay is central to the person you pretend to care about. I won't accept anything less than that. I don't want to be tolerated."

And here is Louis expressing the modern gay activist's dismissal of mere tolerance:

> I mean it's the really hard thing about being Left in this country, the American Left can't help trip over these petrified little fetishes: freedom, that's the worst; you know Jeane Kirkpatrick for God's sake will go on and on about freedom and so what does that mean, the word freedom, when she talks about it, or human rights; you have Bush talking about human rights, and so what are these people talking about. . . . These people don't begin to know what, ontologically, freedom is or human rights, like they see these property-based Rights-of-Man type rights but that's not enfranchisement, not democracy, not what's implicit, what's potential within the idea, not the idea with blood in it. That's just liberalism, really, bourgeois tolerance, and what I think is that what AIDS shows us is the limits of tolerance, that it's not enough to be tolerated, because when the s--- hits the fan you find out how much tolerance is worth. Nothing. And underneath all the tolerance is intense, passionate hatred.

What Louis wants is not the kind of freedom that we talk about in Poli-Sci 101. What he means by "the idea with blood in it" is the freedom to transgress without consequences. And to be tolerated is not good enough; what he wants is to transgress (sexually) and be accepted despite the transgression, or even loved for it the way Roy Cohn wants

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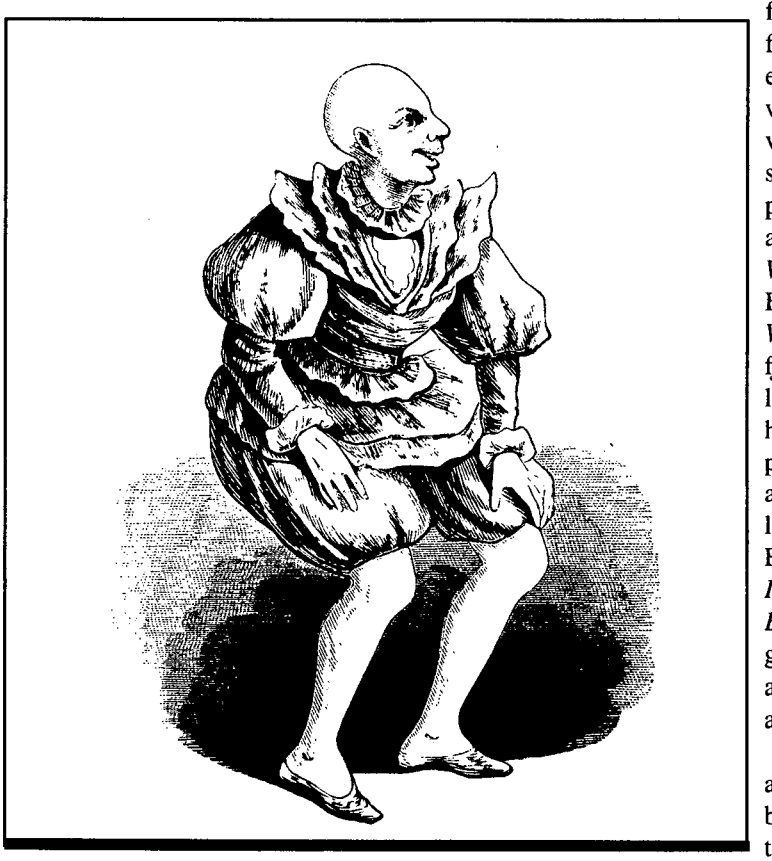
to be loved for his monstrousness. What Louis and Joe actually yearn for is not only freedom to transgress but the freedom to transgress without judgment or guilt:

> LOUIS: . . . It should be the . . . shape of a life, its total complexity . . . which matters in the end, not some stamp of . . . damnation which . . . [results] in some unsatisfying little decision . . .

And later Joe and Louis sit in front of the Hall of Justice.

> JOE: It just flashed through my mind: the whole Hall of Justice, it's empty, it's deserted, it's gone out of business. Forever. The people that make it run have up and abandoned it. . . . I just wondered what a thing it would be . . . if overnight everything you owe anything to, justice, or love, had really gone away. Free. It would be . . . terrible, and . . . very great. To shed your skin, every old skin, one by one and then walk away, unencumbered, into the morning.



What Kushner/Louis cannot accept about the world is the reality of human nature, and therefore they must deny its existence. If gay men can't help their feelings, neither can straight men. If gay men are uncomfortable in the straight world, straight men are just as uncomfortable in the gay world, and a gay man's discomfort is no more valid than a straight man's. Xenophobia is a component of human nature, and is universal. It is probably rooted in our biology, having served adaptational needs throughout the evolutionary process. After all, one human primate could never be sure about whether a stranger primate was dangerous or not. These facts of human nature may be unfortunate but they are incontrovertible and inescapable, and the only solutions that mankind has found to deal with people we don't like or who make us uncomfortable are the essential tricks of civilization: hypocrisy and self-restraint.

This is what makes it possible for civilized men and women who do not have intimate relationships with each other to interact without killing one another. Hypocrisy, tact, tolerance on the one hand and self-restraint, good manners, consideration, on the other, are within the compass of human nature, because they consist of behavior, of actions, and actions can be learned—whereas matters of the heart, feelings, cannot. Alas, tact, good manners, conventions, may sound awfully subversive to some gay men—positively Republican perhaps.

In "Perestroika," Part Two of the play, which was produced in Los Angeles last year but will not appear in New York until next fall, Kushner raises the yearning for innocence and rebirth to a more mystical level. In Part Two, Prior, who was on his deathbed at the end of Part One, has a miraculous remission for dramatic rather than medical reasons so that at the end of the play he can assume the role of a Lazarus/Christ-like prophet, step up to the footlights and speak directly to the audience. This long curtain speech, in which Prior talks about Community, for all its verbosity sounds suspiciously like Forgive us our trespasses and love us for them and we will forgive your trespasses even if you're a Republican as long as you are gay.

Despite its magnitude, despite its pretentious language and pyrotechnics, *Angels in America* lacks the prerequisite for greatness—the transformation of universal experience into art—and what it substitutes for universal experience is messages. It is a propaganda play, and likely to become as dated as Odets's *Waiting for Lefty*, Marc Blitzstein's *The Cradle Will Rock*, or even *Hair*, for that matter. The problem is not Kushner's homosexuality but his provinciality: what is arguably the most perfectly constructed play in the English language—*The Importance of Being Earnest*—was written by a gay man, but it wasn't about gays, it was about all of us.

Despite its ambiguity and the world-class ambivalence of its characters, *Angels in America* is shallow. Talk about high-sounding ideas like Love and Justice and Good and Evil does not qualify a play for profundity—it's what you do with them that counts. And despite his best intentions Kushner never really comes to grips with the dilemmas he invents. Beyond a few nice paradoxes, he ends up in a cloud of mystical, pseudo-religious clichés like Love and Forgiveness Conquer All. To be precise, Prior's final words are, "Bye now. You are fabulous, each and every one, and I love you all. And I bless you. More Life. And bless us all."

Unfortunately, universal love is beyond the capacity of human nature. This is what Kushner—who will not settle for anything less than unqualified love and forgiveness not only from his parents but from us—cannot accept. ❐

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Cathy Young

Russia Votes Yes

But it also voted no.

Moscow

Moscow streets in 1993 bring to mind those "find ten things that are wrong with this picture" games with a palm tree sticking out in the middle of a snowy mountainscape. Looking around as I stood on (unrenamed) Komsomol Avenue, I was thinking that at least 75 percent of what I saw—from the store sign bluntly proclaiming PRODUKTY ("Food") in block letters to the squat, ugly Palace of Youth building with mosaics of robust and merry young men and women on the walls—was exactly as in 1980, only shabbier and dirtier, with more garbage on the sidewalks and more jagged holes in the pavement. But here and there, one could spot something to alarm a Rip Van Winkle from the Brezhnev era: a Kodak sign; the kiosk with its display of flamboyant liqueurs, Marlboros and Winstons, panty hose, dusty shampoo bottles, endless Mars bars, a handwritten sign reading $/DM EXCHANGE; a weatherbeaten notice on a wall of APARTMENT FOR RENT (DOLLARS ONLY); a large poster saying, in lacy old Slavonic letters, HAVE A HAPPY HOLY EASTER on one side and CHRIST IS RISEN! on the other. As two middle-aged women passed by, I caught a snippet of conversation: "Well, no one can hear us now—do tell me how much it costs!"

It was mid-April, and not only were the Russian Orthodox celebrating Easter—complete with three-hour TV coverage of all the pomp and circumstance of the midnight mass in one of the capital's main cathedrals, the camera often focusing on Yeltsin standing with his wife and top government officials—but democrats and anti-democrats of all stripes were consumed by referendum fever. VOTE IN THE REFERENDUM! RUSSIA'S FATE IS IN OUR HANDS! screamed white-and-blue banners all over downtown Moscow; and indeed many people felt that their fate was hanging in the balance. The media did little to help calm their nerves. The popular evening daily *Vechernyaya Moskva* ran a front-page report about Communist death squads lying in wait for Yeltsin. For lighter fare, there was a futuristic tale of the year 2000: under a "red-and-brown" dictatorship that has banned cars and made the wearing of traditional Russian bark sandals mandatory, a citizen doing time in a labor camp rues his failure to vote in the '93 referendum that Yeltsin lost by a single vote.

Cathy Young, TAS*'s Russian Presswatch columnist, is the author of* Growing Up in Moscow *(Ticknor & Fields) and is at work on a book on feminism.*

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Not everyone was impressed. My driver Volodya (whom the constant reader may recall from "Hard Times," *TAS*, February 1992; his son-in-law is in business now and his wife is taking up farming) told me grimly that he wasn't voting: "I'm sick and tired of all these games they're playing with us. They say the results of this referendum can't be legally enforced anyway, right? Well, then, why should I bother?"

There were skeptics among the more sophisticated as well—such as Tamara, a literary translator, and her husband Sandro, a science professor, who were disgusted by the crude "Soviet-style" pro-Yeltsin propaganda campaign in the media and felt that both sides were almost equally loathsome. Tamara held her nose and voted after all, resigning herself to being needled by Sandro.

Most of my acquaintances, however, were appalled by the cynics. "Apathy" was out and rallies were in again, and people were talking politics. Walking in the crowded Arbat metro station behind two women in their forties, I heard one say emphatically, "These idiots get here to Moscow and think that just because they're deputies they can do anything—if he likes, he can decree that from this day on, Arbat will be spelled with an O." I couldn't help chuckling, and the woman turned to me eagerly: "We're telling it like it is, right?"

"Sure," I nodded, taking advantage of my unaccented Russian.

"You're on our side too?" she beamed, and I asked, a little gingerly, what side that was. "Why, the good side—the president's side! You're for Yeltsin, aren't you?" I said I was, and we parted all smiles.

Still, there were good reasons to be put off by the pro-Yeltsin campaign, even if such reservations might be overshadowed by fear of the other side's victory. All one had to do was look at some of the posters issued by Yeltsin supporters. One showed a grinning, cocky worker in overalls and a visor cap holding four ballots marked *Yes, Yes, No, Yes*, the politically correct answers to the four referendum questions (confidence in Yeltsin, approval of his policies, new presidential elections, new parliamentary elections), while four snake-like microphones representing deputies in the Congress hissed at him menacingly. The caption read,

Never trusted them one bit!
I vote Yes, Yes, No, Yes—that's it!

The worker had a decidedly Soviet, brave-common-man look about him. Another poster of a smiling Yeltsin, clenched fist held up, flatly declared, A PRESIDENT MUST ALWAYS WIN (a motto that would delight certain folks in Washington, D.C.), amidst signatures of people who were utterly unknown to me but turned out to be Russian rock stars. (There was a "Rock for Yeltsin" concert on Red Square, too.)

The campaign was star-studded enough to match the Clinton White House: actors, musicians, and athletes appeared on pro-Yeltsin posters and fliers and figured prominently in popular newspapers like *Vechernyaya Moskva* and the irreverent, tabloid-style *Kuranty*. *Kuranty* introduced a daily front-page "My Choice" column featuring distinguished people to suit every taste, from Elena Bonner to stand-up comedian Gennady Khazanov, who said, "I will vote Yes, Yes, No, Yes so that we don't get a régime that has only one word for us: No!"

Veteran TV sportscaster Nikolai Ozerov, currently the head of the Spartak soccer fan club, made a bathetic statement refuting the claim of the Communist newspaper *Sovetskaya Rossiya* that the club sympathized with the anti-Yeltsinites, and affirming his loyalty to the president and to the red, white, and blue of democratic Russia. This was especially touching to those who remembered Ozerov on TV in the old days, faithfully presenting every Soviet athletic victory as a triumph for Communism and every defeat as a result of evil anti-Soviet plotting by judges or referees.

"I'm still undecided. But your recent headline, 'Vote for Yeltsin if You Want to Live,' was awful. What is this supposed to mean—if you're against, you'll be killed?"

Vechernyaya Moskva had a daily one-hour direct line for callers to express their opinions on the referendum, with comments published the next day—from the Jewish engineer who said that she and her mother lived in fear of fascism and were voting for Yeltsin to avert this threat; from the retired woman who said Yeltsin's opponents were bloodthirsty madmen, adding, "I receive a minimum pension, but I'm not going hungry—no one's going hungry, it's all lies"; from a nameless lady who said, "We'll tie your Yeltsin to the railroad tracks, and all of you too! [expletives deleted] You filthy Yids! [expletives deleted] Scum!" On April 19, the newspaper peevishly complained about being unfairly accused by some readers of biased selection of opinions, and resorted to listing all the calls of the previous day; pro-Yeltsin callers outnumbered anti-Yeltsin ones by four-to-one. Occasionally, there were voices of hesitancy, such as one Galina Aleksandrovna: "I'm still undecided. But your recent headline, 'Vote for Yeltsin if You Want to Live,' was awful. What is this supposed to mean—if you're against, you'll be killed?" (Others praised the headline for conveying a proper sense of urgency.)

(continued on page 30)

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Time of Troubles

by Adrian Karatnycky

Russia's "centrist" forces are not go-slow-reformers but proponents of a statist economy, who regard the disintegration of the USSR as a regrettable *and reversible* event. An extremist majority in Russia's parliament—consisting of two-thirds of deputies—poses a constant threat to President Yeltsin and Russian democracy. Although the Russian people—including the Russian military—gave President Yeltsin their backing in the April 26 referendum, the Civic Union's "Great Russian" ideas have the potential to win the support of large segments of Russia's electorate in this autumn's likely elections.

Russia's May Day celebrations were marred by extremist neo-Communist violence in which a policeman was killed by a mob. Instigated by lumpenized shirts from the Working Russia movement, the protests were backed by the National Salvation Front, whose leaders also head Russia's largest parliamentary bloc, Russian Unity. Russia's erratic parliamentary speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov added to tensions by declaring that Yeltsin had lost the referendum and had succeeded in splitting the country. With Yeltsin's disloyal Vice President Aleksandr Rutskoy a heartbeat away from power, Russia's political scene remains unpredictable.

An alliance of Russian ultranationalists and the main currents of the Civic Union would be dangerously similar to the balance of political forces that dominates Serbia. Like the Serbian political majority, anti-Yeltsin forces want to revise borders, challenge the West, protect a state economy, and restore a multinational federal state. While Yeltsin has taken on the neo-Communists, he has tried to dampen the appeal of ultranationalists by adopting an assertive Russian foreign policy. Under intense nationalist pressure, Yeltsin has reluctantly permitted Russian troops to be engaged in combat in Tajikistan, Georgia, and Moldova. And on March 29, Russia stopped its agreed withdrawal of forces in the Baltic states.

Russia's 1993 oil production may fall 20 percent compared to 1991—and Russia plans to make neighboring Ukraine bear the brunt of this decline. Kiev has been told it will receive 15-20 million metric tons of oil this year—around 50 percent of the 1992 allotment—at twice the price Russia will charge Belarus and other, more accommodating states. In January, Russia and Kazakhstan created an energy exporters' group within the CIS to pressure energy-dependent republics into greater political, economic, and military integration.

Such foreign bullying dovetails ominously with developments in Ukraine itself, where 242 of the parliament's 450 deputies have called for a motion to relegalize the banned Communist Party to be put on the legislative calendar. Parliamentary Speaker Ivan Plyushch has tried to pack the Supreme Court with ex-Communist cronies, who could overturn the ban. Forces opposed to economic reform and statehood have allied in a Labor Party that derives support from industrial directors. And a May Day celebration by the "Working Ukraine" coalition brought 5,000 pro-Communists onto the streets of Kiev.

Since the failed August coup of 1991, Ukraine's politics has evolved almost as a photographic negative of Russia's. While Yeltsin's democratic reformers took power in Russia's government early on, in Ukraine ex-Communists clung to power by embracing the patriotic slogans and nation-building agenda of the democratic nationalist Rukh party. But as Ukraine's president and prime minister plunged the nation into deep economic crisis, opposition voices gained a foothold in a coalition government, just as President Yeltsin was surrendering key democratic ministers to the anti-reform axe.

A campaign by Rukh and other democratic parties to force new elections exerted pressure on ex-Communist legislators, who feared losing office for supporting a corrupt, ineffectual government. A strike of railway, airline, and mine workers paralyzed the country in September 1992 and was the first sign of social unrest.

Whatever the political differences, Ukraine's economic balance sheet much resembles Russia's. Under the government of Communist holdover Vitold Fokin, the first nine months of 1992 saw Ukraine's gross national product fall by 12 percent, gross social product (spending on pensions and other social services) by 18 percent, industrial production by 19.7 percent, production of consumer goods by 12 percent, and the production of foodstuffs by 17.5 percent. Monthly inflation exceeded 30 percent and the budget deficit was 44 percent of GDP.

In October 1992, economic crisis loosened the grip of the nomenklatura and led to Fokin's ouster at the hands of Prime Minister Leonid Kuchma and his reform coalition. As the director of the Pivdenmash machine-building complex—which produced ICBMs—Kuchma was not an apparatchik but a design engineer. As prime minister he quickly entrusted key ministries to democrats, and Deputy Prime Minister Viktor Penzenyk has sought to make reform "irreversible" by drafting plans for widespread privatization. But despite Kuchma's efforts at budget and money-supply cuts, Ukraine's dependence on Russian fuel is certain to plague its efforts at economic stability.

As in Russia, the military has stayed out of the fray. The Ukrainian Defense Ministry was started from scratch in October 1991, *before* Ukrainian independence was proclaimed by referendum, and so was staffed by officers ready to take risks—unlike Russia's, which inherited functionaries from the old order and used the structure of the old Soviet Defense Ministry and Red Army. Moreover, Defense Minister Konstantin Morozov relied on

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Adrian Karatnycky is assistant to the president of the AFL-CIO and co-author (with Nadia Diuk) of New Nations Rising: The Fall of the Soviets and the Challenge of Independence, *just published by John Wiley and Sons.*

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the help of the nationalist Union of Ukrainian Officers in his early efforts.

Ukraine's long-term prospects for democratization and market reform are better than Russia's. Polls reveal far lower public support for authoritarian power than in Russia. Ukraine has seen few Russian-style mass protests by hard-liners. Outside of the Crimea, Ukraine has no fractious ethnic conflicts, nor does it face the centrifugal regionalism tearing at the Russian Federation. In both countries, parliaments were elected in the Soviet period and remain a redoubt of the Communist nomenklatura. But whereas in Russia the USSR's collapse divided democrats (into those favoring Russian hegemony and those backing the newly independent states), in Ukraine it divided the Communists (into pro- and anti-independence groups).

With long-term prospects for Russia unclear, Ukraine may emerge as a critical buffer between Europe and a potentially unstable Russia. Yet Western policy foolishly continues to focus on Russia. While the desire to help President Yeltsin in his current struggle is understandable, stabilizing Russia while Ukraine languishes could destabilize Russia's Western flank and inspire separatist movements in Ukraine's Russian-speaking Southeast, a hotbed of efforts to revive the Communist Party. A Ukraine riven by secession would be an inviting target for Russian imperialists.

Ukraine should be the focus of Western strategic thinking—and aid. A pro-Ukrainian orientation would not mean abandoning Russia's democrats; it would signal a policy that hedges the West's bets. This policy would require a shift of focus from nuclear non-proliferation to a broader agenda that responds to Ukraine's legitimate fears about its national and economic security. Today, with 176 nuclear missiles on its soil, Ukraine is being urged by the West to complete its nuclear disarmament, and stands accused by Russia and the U.S. of blocking the START I and START II agreements.

Kiev's stance needs to be better understood. Ukraine objects to Russia's imposition of new rules in the nuclear game, including the insistence that Ukraine's nuclear arsenal be transferred to Russian jurisdiction. Ukraine agreed to turn these weapons over to the joint CIS—*not* Russian—strategic forces. And with the virtual collapse of CIS authority, it would be folly for Ukraine to deliver its soldiers and weapons to a foreign power—a foreign power whose parliament has made territorial claims against Ukraine.

Ukraine's leaders also seek security guarantees that would protect a non-nuclear Ukraine from nuclear blackmail. While the Clinton administration has failed to develop a comprehensive Ukraine policy and Western Europe ignores the security vacuum in East and Central Europe, the leaders of the former Soviet bloc states are increasingly pointing to Ukraine's strategic significance. President Lech Walesa and Hungary's President Arpad Goncz and Prime Minister Jozsef Antall have underscored the need for closer Western relations with a country that still has 52 million people, nuclear weapons, and Europe's second-largest standing army. ❐

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Victor Davidoff, a former Soviet political prisoner and current U.S. citizen who went back to Russia in 1991 to help build capitalism and is now launching that country's first press syndicate, told me he was sickened by the deluge of propaganda: "It's as if you had a presidential election with the media covering only one side of the campaign. Just like the good old days, with a parade of factory workers and distinguished milkmaids and honored artists solemnly declaring that they support the party and the government."

Indeed, reading such things as the *Kuranty* report on Yeltsin's visit to Russia's first, brand-new breakfast cereal factory—"The workers met Boris Yeltsin with posters that said, 'We Support the President's Policies' and 'We Say Yes to Reform' "—one couldn't help getting a strong sense of déja vu. (Could a word from the supervisor have had something to do with these posters?)

It was hardly a precise analogy, of course. Dissenting voices were at least formally aired in the major media, and the opposition could publish its own papers and demonstrate in the streets. Besides, most Yeltsin backers pointed out that their support for the president was not uncritical and that they acknowledged his numerous flaws: "A hot temperament that lapses into impulsiveness, and sometimes, paradoxically, into procrastination and delayed action," wrote S. Lezhnevsky in *Vechernyaya Moskva.* "And yet, whatever you say, there is something appealing about the man—somewhat coarse but candid, straightforward, sincerely devoted to Russia." (This is not something that Brezhnev, or even Gorbachev in his glory days, would have ever read about himself.) In *Moskovsky Komsomolets*, Aleksandr Minkin grumbled about having to choose between the president and the Congress, and wrote that he would have much preferred to vote for president: "I have a candidate of my choice—a man of intelligence, talent, character, renown, and integrity. With Yeltsin, I'll get to vote for that man someday. With the Congress, I doubt it."

There were good reasons to be put off by the pro-Yeltsin campaign, even if such reservations might be overshadowed by fear of the other side's victory.

Many of my pro-Yeltsin acquaintances took pains to stress that they were not idolizing, or idealizing, their president; perhaps the "cult of personality" experience had taught them a lesson. But all too often they did protest too much. I tried out a little objectivity test, asking several people about the day Yeltsin took the podium at the Supreme Soviet in an unmistakable state of inebriation.

The Yeltsin foes, the disaffected, and the cynics gleefully asserted that he had been dead drunk, barely able to put two words together. "By the time he went out to join the rally a few hours later, he had sobered up and looked all right," Davidoff told me, "but I heard the fumes were so bad you couldn't get closer to him than twenty feet." My old school pal Rita, too, chuckled over such a "disgrace," with no memory of how, three years ago when Boris was her man, she heatedly assured me that tapes of one of his American speeches had been doctored by the Soviet media to make a jet-lagged Yeltsin appear drunk.

And not a single Yeltsin partisan did I encounter who would even entertain the possibility that the president had taken as much as a drop. Since the speech in question was broadcast on loyal Russian TV, claims of a doctored video could hardly be sustained, but how much ingenuity does it take to think of other explanations? The most common one was fatigue: "Drunk? Oh, come *on*! He was exhausted, that's all! He hadn't slept three nights, he had just buried his mother . . ." And a more original version: "He had just come out of a sauna and he was a little woozy from all the steam." I waited for someone to say that if people did smell liquor on the president's breath, he had only used it as mouthwash but didn't swallow.

On April 20, the *Independent Gazette*—virtually the only democratic publication that has consciously tried to remain non-partisan—ran a front-page editorial by chief editor Viktor Tretyakov, appealing for calm and making a heretical suggestion: that the media should refrain from further agitation and "let people quietly think for themselves in the remaining five days." Alas, Tretyakov added, this idea was "utterly unrealistic."

Several papers had a "countdown to the referendum" (which reminded me of those "only 12 more shopping days till Christmas" blurbs); toward the end, some were running daily front-page reminders of how to vote, along with unpaid-for, full-page ads from the Citizens' Committee for the Referendum. An ad in *Moskovsky Komsomolets*—"Think and Choose: Do You Want a Normal Life in a Strong Democratic Russia (Vote Yes, Yes, No, Yes) or the Pseudodemocracy of the Soviets, Civil War, and Sausage Rationing Cards (Vote No, No, Yes, No)"—was framed by stark cartoons: a wolfpack lurking behind a peasant on a horse-drawn sled, the pack leader saying, "Communists, forward!"; a suit-clad skeleton at the parliamentary podium reciting the familiar Soviet slogan, "Lenin Is More Alive Than All the Living!"

It was hard to fault the Russian media for partisanship, given the general assumption that a Yeltsin defeat in the referendum would mean a victory for the Communist/nationalist forces (though one businessman, recounting his tribulations at the hands of bureaucrats,

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told *Kuranty* in exasperation, "They keep warning us the Communists may come back; well, did they ever leave?"). *Kuranty* may have been somewhat unfair to run a photo spread of young Russian neo-Nazis, marching in black uniforms and working out, under the headline "The Fascists Prefer Khasbulatov"—particularly since the only evidence in the accompanying text of the neo-Nazis' affection for the speaker was that they wanted Yeltsin to lose. However, the fact that the "red-and-browns" were campaigning hysterically against Yeltsin did little to dispel the perception, lamented by some moderate Yeltsin critics, that the choice was between Yeltsin and Red fascism.

Vasily Selynin, a well-known radical economist who works closely with the pro-Yeltsin Democratic Russia coalition, told me that the best campaigning for the president was done by the other side. At one point, *Pravda* resorted to printing a list of leading democratic journalists and commentators described as Yeltsin's agents in the media—complete with home telephone numbers, which resulted in threatening calls in the middle of the night.

Once, I picked up a National Salvation Front leaflet, printed on a piece of paper unevenly cut from what had been (on the reverse) a proclamation of the "Brotherhood of the Slavs of Russia"; the NSF must be short on paper. The leaflet reminded Muscovites of galloping inflation and the collapsing economy, urging them to "go to the referendum and say NO TO YELTSIN and his policies of looting and exterminating the people" and also to join a "March of the Outraged People" on Friday, April 23, starting at five p.m. on Mayakovsky Square. Passing by in a gypsy cab around that time, I glimpsed three or four hundred people gathered under a curious assemblage of flags—the red of the Communists and the white and light blue of the monarchists.

On the metro, I saw another National Salvation Front leaflet, with an angry woman brandishing her fist (adapted from a famous wartime poster, "The Motherland Calls!"), pasted on the wall *across the tracks from the platform.* I racked my brains over this puzzle—one would need a six-foot-long arm at the least to accomplish such a feat—until a friend suggested that it had probably been put there after hours by a metro employee.

In all the commotion about the referendum, the opening of the coup plotters' trial on April 14—interrupted on the same day, when one of the defendants had a heart attack—was barely noticed. Also lost in the shuffle was Lenin's April 22 birthday. *Kuranty* displayed a cruel picture of the "leader of the world proletariat" in his last days—paralyzed by a stroke, his face and terrible vacant eyes speaking eloquently of disintegration. In *Moskovsky Komsomolets*, Minkin wrote about how evil and sinister Lenin's yellowed mummy looked in the mausoleum, "radiating diabolical malice." He suggested that to please everyone, the mausoleum should be left standing but the body inside buried and replaced with a wax model: it shouldn't be any less sacred to the Leninists (after all, Christians have no problem with paintings and statues of Christ), and all others will breathe a sigh of relief. Minkin also recalls stumbling on a 1990 order of the Soviet Council of Ministers approving a program of "ideological-aesthetic education" through monuments and memorials, including not only a Sholokhov (*Quiet Flows the Don*) and a Ho Chi Minh but a total of fifteen Lenins: "Just imagine—in 1990, he was still breeding!"

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Referendum day went by quietly, despite panicky rumors of terror squads and planned disruptions of the vote. On Monday, as it became clear that Yeltsin had won a vote of confidence but had not gotten enough votes to force new parliamentary elections, there crept in a morning-after feeling of much ado about nothing—a sense that after all the nervous tension, all the campaigning, all the rally-going, all the waiting, the standoff was back to where it had been before. (Perhaps the *Independent Gazette*'s Tretyakov would say that this was the best possible outcome.) The banners urging people to take their fate in their hands and vote were gone, replaced by announcement of a series of concerts by the aging but daring rock singer, Alla Pugachova. ❐

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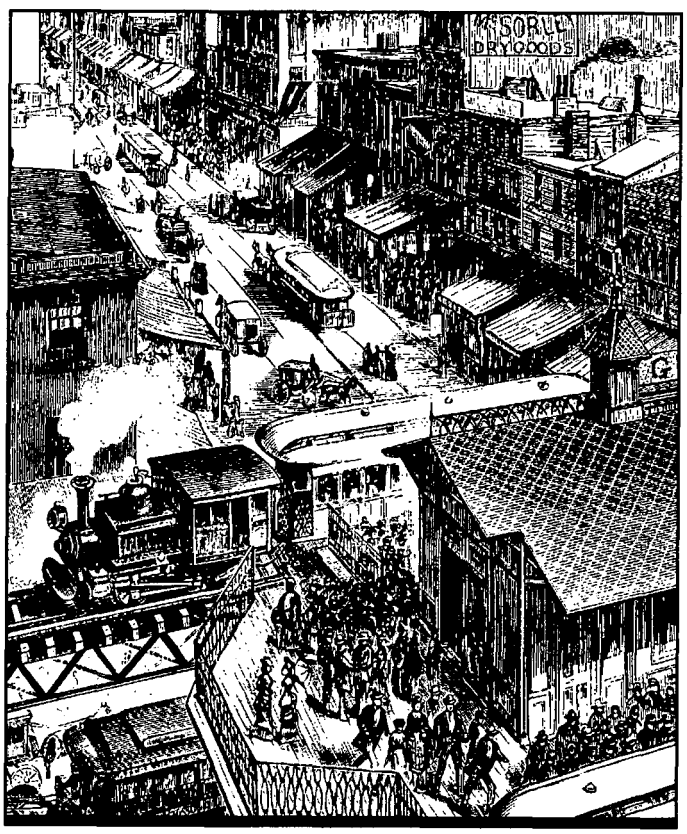
George Gilder

Wealth and Poverty Revisited

The author of a Reagan-era classic finds that his arguments have taken on new meaning in the slavishly statist Clinton interregnum.



Wealth and Poverty began its career as a modest tract, to be called "The Pursuit of Poverty," sharing a total advance of $8,000 with *Visible Man*, which sold some 800 copies in the first year and achieved poverty for me. Nonetheless, when first published in late 1980, *Wealth and Poverty* leapt toward the top of best-seller lists in much of the civilized world. It was seen as the Bible of the incoming administration of Ronald Reagan and, indeed, Reagan himself had read early drafts of the final chapters and written enthusiastically to the author. Beginning with the erudite campaign director William Casey, the cerebral budgeteer David Stockman, and the visionary adviser Jack Kemp, several top Reagan aides helped edit the book before publication.

On release, however, interest was chiefly confined to Washington. At Basic Books in New York, editor Midge Decter had had to work hard to win a first printing of some 5,000 copies. Basic's publicity chief refused to send copies to Stockman to distribute to the cabinet at its introductory press conference. The Basic man explained: "They won't review the book. We'll wait for the *New York Times*."

George Gilder is a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute in Seattle, Washington. Parts of this essay appear in a new edition of Wealth and Poverty *published by ICS Press in June.*

The explosion of demand for this supply-side tract surprised nearly everyone except myself, who like most authors had imagined best-seller performance for all his books, including *Visible Man*. From *People* magazine to "60 Minutes," I found myself racing through the gantlets of sudden celebrity, dwarfed by huge screens above me blaring my face at massive audiences, blandished by intent presidents, vice presidents, and cabinet leaders with yellow pads at the ready, and beset by ardent journalists and photographers from Washington, Paris, Rome, and Seoul.

As a celebrity, however, I had many limitations, including a genuine disdain for television journalists: all the feminist women with their frizzy hair, designer jogging suits, and impeccable *Kultursmog*, and the endlessly conformist young men, with their bland, obligatory little touches of rebellion, such as dirty running shoes with their coats and ties, and all determined to become rich by promoting socialism (without even knowing it). Within a few months, they understandably stopped calling on me, and I found to my surprise that I rather missed them.

The whirl now moved on to Diana, Madonna, Michael Kinsley, and other more durable luminaries who could smile at a camera or undress before it (yet another promotion strategy entirely overlooked by Basic

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Books as they awaited the verdict of Roger Starr at the *Times*). I moved on to smile at microchips. I soon discovered that, amid all the uproar, the central theme of my work had not been grasped even by some of my closest intellectual allies in the conservative movement. Indeed, the central theme was missed by nearly all reviewers. This failure was so widespread that I was forced to conclude that it was mostly my fault. To rectify the situation, I published an explanatory essay in 1982 in *The American Spectator*, which in 1979-80 had issued two key chapters of *Wealth and Poverty* before its publication.

Most critics focused on the policy implications of the book. On the surface, the book makes many claims and prophecies for the efficacy and justice of tax cuts and deregulation. Although the left continues to demur, history has confirmed all these claims, and conservatives have generally accepted them.

Today, in both the Academy and Congress, some of the more besotted Keynesians still assert that the impact of broad tax-rate reductions may be adverse for the economy because the income effect (people have more money, so they need to work less) overcomes the substitution effect (work pays more relative to leisure, so they work more).

It was seen as the Bible of the incoming administration of Ronald Reagan and, indeed, Reagan himself had read early drafts of the final chapters and written enthusiastically to the author.

For example, Alice Rivlin, the estimable chief economist at Clinton's Office of Management and Budget, has long maintained that high tax rates spur workers to new frenzies of effort while low tax rates lure them into leisure. The chairman of Clinton's Council of Economic Advisers, Laura Tyson, is so benighted that across all the desolate wastes of socialism she can see "no evidence" that high taxes retard growth. She previously seemed well in over her head as the fourth-ranking economist at her own Berkeley Roundtable on International Economics. But now, through the magic of quotas, this lame leftist has raced ahead of fellow BRIE stalwarts John Zysman, Stephen Cohen, and Michael Borrus, all far more widely and impressively published than Tyson and all having qualified themselves equally well for the administration by getting every tax, trade, and technology issue wrong for fifteen years.

Clinton cannot even tell a glum demonstrator or litigator from a potential marine, or a tax from an investment, but he sure can tell a man from a woman. Clinton's crude treatment of women as an interest group to be bought off like the Trial Lawyers by putting a series of leftist and pro-lesbian females on display reveals his real contempt for women. I predict that the single most baffling disappointment of Clinton's career will be his failure to win a majority of females in 1996 after reducing his administration to a comic auxiliary of the Women's Political Caucus in pursuit of their votes. Women may vote differently from men, but they are no more eager to see themselves or their husbands pay ever more taxes in an ever-shrinking private economy.

In the real world outside the administration, responsible analysts now accept the supply-side case. As Martin Feldstein recently wrote in the *Wall Street Journal*, "Statistical evidence has convinced the overwhelming majority of the economic profession that individuals respond very substantially to the incentives created by tax rules." Extending the definition of "work" to all productive economic activity, it can be seen that in general the lower the tax rates, the more real "work" is done, and the healthier the economy. As I show in *Wealth and Poverty*, work in the form of tax finagles or in the form of uncapitalized and thus inefficient manual labor may thrive in a high-tax economy. But effective work—expanding productivity and growth—requires lower marginal tax rates: lower rates on additional earnings and capital gains.

In this debate, Paul Craig Roberts first made the crucial point and I expanded on it. While one individual might work less because a tax cut brings him more income, most individuals cannot work less. If most individuals worked less, national income would decline. People in general would have less income, and by the income effect would have to work more. Thus the income effect on one worker (or investor) cancels itself out with many workers (and investors).

The substitution effect necessarily prevails, and people work more (and supply other factors of production more abundantly) when they are taxed less onerously on their additional efforts and inputs. That is why Arthur Laffer's famous curve is right. Contrary to widespread political claims to the contrary, U.S. revenues rose steadily at every government level following implementation of the 1980s tax cuts. The total government deficit had declined nearly 50 percent as a share of GNP until new taxes were levied and sweeping regulations imposed by the federal government and thirty-five states during the late 1980s and early 1990s. As has been demonstrated repeatedly throughout history, lower tax rates bring more revenues and high tax rates eventually destroy an economy.

By the 1990s, contrary to the claims of the current administration, the U.S. at all levels of government was back near world leadership in taxes. Although nations with nationalized health care show nominally higher tax burdens, the U.S.—with its government regulated, insured, and subsidized health-care system and its acute problems of AIDS and inner-city violence—spends some 50 percent more per capita on health care. Exclusive of health-care levies, U.S. producers now face tax rates as onerous as any in the industrialized world outside Scandinavia. U.S. taxes on capital are near the world's highest. In general the lowest tax rates are found in the "newly industrialized coun-

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tries" of Asia that now lead the world both in economic growth and in growth of government revenues. The low-tax arguments of *Wealth and Poverty* are more relevant than ever today, as more and more of our industrial rivals discover the magic of supply-side economics.

As I explore more deeply in *Recapturing the Spirit of Enterprise* (ICS Press, 1992), the tax-rate reductions in the 1980s not only enhanced productivity; they also fostered equality. While the existing rich thrived in the inflationary, high-tax environment of the late 1970s and early 1980s, the move to lower tax and inflation rates after 1982 reversed this concentration of financial power. High taxes, after all, do not stop you from being rich; they stop you from getting rich and challenging existing wealth. After the Reagan tax cuts went into effect, for example, some 60 percent of the previous incumbents fell out of the Forbes 400 Richest Americans list, displaced by insurgent new wealth.

The huge surge of inequality constantly bewailed in the media actually happened in the late 1970s, when, by the measure of the Congressional Budget Office and the Federal Reserve Board, some 62 percent of income gains went to the wealthiest one percent of the population. Between 1980 and 1989, however, that number dropped to 38 percent for the top percentile. After 1983, when the Reagan tax cuts unleashed America's entrepreneurs, the top percentile's share of income gains plummeted all the way to 20 percent.

Alice Rivlin, the estimable chief economist at Clinton's Office of Management and Budget, has long maintained that high tax rates spur workers to new frenzies of effort while low taxes lure them into leisure.

The same pattern of radically increasing equality that occurred in incomes can be also found in the distribution of wealth. The largest increases in real wealth in the 1980s accrued to mostly middle-class holders of corporate and public-employee pension plans. In the red by hundreds of billions of dollars in 1980, these funds gained some $2 trillion in real worth during the rest of the decade. At the same time, as Jude Wanniski points out, the creation of more than 20 million new jobs was crucial in wiping out a $4 trillion deficit in the Social Security system. Media estimates of maldistributed wealth that focus on stock and real estate gains by the rich but fail to measure this some $6 trillion of gains in real middle-class net worth are like a topographical survey of the American continent that leaves out the Rocky Mountains.

Meanwhile, an explosion of small-business creation and expansion allowed more income mobility than in any previous era, with a Treasury study showing that during the 1980s earners in the bottom fifth were more likely to reach the top fifth than to stay at the bottom.

On one point, however, *Wealth and Poverty* made a serious error. In several chapters, I cited the so-called personal savings rate—a Keynesian residual computed by subtracting consumption spending from national income—as a suitable measure of the amount of personal savings available for productive investment. Thus, I opened myself to the charge that the low personal savings rates during the Reagan administration revealed a key flaw in the supply-side case.

The fact is that the measured personal savings rate has virtually nothing to do with the ability to invest. By that measure, the Soviet Union during its final years or the U.S. during the Great Depression could have been world-beating investors. Investment depends not on the avoidance of consumption but on the growth of assets or entrepreneurial ideas that can serve as collateral for loans or issues of equity.

This thesis was powerfully expounded by Jude Wanniski's associate, David Goldman of Polyconomics, in a recent essay called "The New Jersey School of Supply-Side Economics" (a comedown from the school that once grandly explained "The Way the World Works," but let it pass). Goldman's paper showed that "the savings rate does not determine the level of investment; in practice the elasticity of capital with respect to opportunity is unlimited. At any given time, the market can draw upon a nearly inexhaustible fund of uncollateralized assets to transform into capital." During the 1980s, the U.S. achieved an immense buildup of some $37 trillion of such collateral, spearheaded by new assets and new technologies that resulted in a tripling of stock market values and fueled the high rates of growth during that period.

The immense growth of real private savings during the 1980s is indicated by a rise from $160 million to over $1 trillion in the excess of corporate equity over corporate debt. Even much of the debt, such as junk bonds, was in fact a form of high-risk equity disguised for tax purposes as interest-paying securities. Since *Wealth and Poverty* repeatedly repudiated such demand-side jargon as the personal savings rate, it was ironic that this slip into the Keynesian idiom occasioned what seemed the most telling critique of the supply-side arguments.

Supply-siders reject the very notion that consumer demand is a significant force in economic growth. With a false dichotomy between so-called final purchases (mostly performed by individuals as consumers) and intermediate spending (mostly performed by individuals in their roles in businesses), the usual demand-side models suggest that consumer spending comprises close to 70 percent of the economy. As Mark Skousen has shown, the correct measure is close to one-third. But in general, consumers still cannot buy or save anything without producing first. Personal savings is just a spurious residual of the already spurious Keynesian measure of consumer demand.

As *Wealth and Poverty* maintained, all purchasing power and savings are the result of past, present, or projected pro-

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duction and of entrepreneurial risk-taking on unique technologies and business ideas. Being unique, these investments entail uninsurable risk and must be complemented by a flow of capital gains and other sources of new investment. Average personal savings rates are irrelevant to this process. The real lesson of the "savings" critique of supply-side economics and of *Wealth and Poverty* is that in order to depict the real forces of growth, we must eschew the entire demand-side model of the economy and all the conceptual baggage it contains.

The 1980s, in general, fully vindicated *Wealth and Poverty*'s social and economic arguments. This was the era when leftist dreams all collapsed in travesty. The mock-heroic youth of the 1960s emerged from schools sure that their nation was evil and owed them a living for their moral superiority, and capable of making no contribution to society except passing on their crippling creeds to future generations. The 1980s taught them the unwanted lesson that Marxist slogans, a sense of grievance, and a rhetoric of rights and "demands" are economically useless. Disdainful of science, enterprise, and other practical learning, they moved into law, teaching, and politics. Incapable of performing any useful task for a business, they thronged into the environmental movement. There they could harass businesses from a moral pinnacle without submitting to the humbling discipline of serving customers. They crowded onto the pulpits of the media and the academy in such numbers that a reporter or a professor often made less money than a garbage man. Seething at such obvious inequities of capitalism, they castigated the prosperous for "greed" and "workaholism."

Wealth and Poverty predicted the death of socialism. The 1980s were the decade when socialism died and left nothing but a bristling carcass of weapons pointed toward the West. It was the decade when tax rates were cut in fifty-five nations, following our success, and revenues dropped in nearly all nations that raised their rates. It was the era when capitalism at last demonstrated conclusively its superiority as an economic system. It was the era when U.S. economic growth rates, long lagging behind the rest of the world, surged ahead of Europe, Africa, and Latin America, and nearly caught up with Japan's for the first time since the early 1950s.

The 1980s also saw the longest peacetime expansion on record, with the highest rates of investment in capital equipment and the highest sustained rates of manufacturing productivity growth of any postwar recovery. During the 1980s, the U.S. increased its share of global manufacturing output, global exports, and global production. Contrary to thousands of reports to the contrary, U.S. balance sheets mostly improved, with debt as a share of assets dropping drastically for both businesses and households, as equity, net-savings, and real-estate values rose far more rapidly than indebtedness. Even government debt, as a share of GNP or in relation to real national assets, remained under control by historic and international standards.

After the tax rate reductions urged by *Wealth and Poverty* took effect in 1983 and 1984, total revenues at all levels of government rose some 9 percent a year in real terms, far faster than during the high-tax 1970s. During the 1980s recovery, industrial output rose nearly 40 percent, personal income 20 percent, and all segments of American society benefited from the creation of 22 million new jobs at rising real wages. Black employment rose 30.3 percent and Hispanic employment nearly 50 percent.

Unlike previous decades of growth, moreover, the American expansion of the 1980s came in the face of declining growth in Europe and Japan. Rather than being pulled ahead by faster development abroad as in previous decades of growth, the U.S. in the 1980s led the world economy. The greatest U.S. triumph was the computer revolution, entirely a product of relentless discipline and entrepreneurial genius in capitalist nations. Computer industry revenues more than quadrupled; unit sales rose by a factor of hundreds; and computer cost-effectiveness rose ten-thousand-fold. At the end of the decade, U.S. companies still held some two-thirds of the world market, and in critical software and leading-edge microchips their market share was above 70 percent and growing. In particular, the U.S. led in using personal computers, with well over half of the world's 100 million PCs located in the U.S. in 1990. The U.S. still commands three times as much computer power per capita as the Japanese or Europeans.

This development, which impelled most of the world's economic growth during the decade, was also disastrous for the left. The left has always pinned its hopes on politics. The converging technologies of computers and telecommunications are radically reducing the power of politicians. An ever-increasing share of world wealth assumed the mobile form of information technologies which, unlike the massive industrial systems of the past, are difficult to measure, capture, or tax. The computer age is an age of mind—elusive, and hard to control. This ascent of mind, predicted in *Wealth and Poverty*, is devaluing all the entrenchments of material resources and geography within the ken and command of politicians. As Mikhail Gorbachev himself has observed, the computer revolution was critical to the crisis of Communism: "We were among the last to understand that in an age of information science the most valuable asset is knowledge, springing from human imagination and creativity. We will be paying for our mistake for many years to come."

The entire left suffered a similar discomfiture. Nonetheless, under the slack domestic leadership of President George Bush, who joined Congress in simultaneously increasing taxes, spending, and regulation, the direction of policy was reversed from a decade before. The morale of liberalism suddenly began to recover.

Under the Clinton administration—with its strange notion of taxing and tariffing the nation into prosperity—this liberal recovery is likely to be short-lived. Although the left may never believe it, demand-side economics is dead.

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In an increasingly competitive global economy, a government can no more raise its revenues simply by raising its taxes than a company can raise its income simply by raising its prices. Like a company, a government must constantly lower its prices and improve its services to expand its markets (its tax base). In the 1990s, the U.S. needed further rounds of tax-rate reductions, deregulations, and simplifications in order to lower its deficit.

In spite of a period of economic malaise, however, the U.S. economy commands tremendous strengths. The world-leading technologies financed by venture capital and junk bonds during the 1980s laid the foundation for strong economic expansion through the rest of the century. In the absence of a siege of protectionism, based on the obtuse notion that a trade balance is desirable in an age of global capital markets, the U.S. economy could double in real terms by early in the next century.

Why then are so many people properly worried about the future of our economy? It is not just the threat of still more taxes, spending, and regulation. An equal danger remains the one spelled out in the poverty theme of *Wealth and Poverty*. By the critical indices of marital stability, which is what mostly matters, the eighties brought tragedy to millions of American families and their children. Contrary to all the claims of the left, female-headed families are usually a disaster, incapable of disciplining boys or of escaping poverty. Poverty alone, however, is not the key problem. Census figures showed that the poorest Americans spent some two times more money than they reported as income. Their plight was one not chiefly of money but of morale brought on by the erosion of the moral codes of civilized society. America's cities discovered that patriarchy is not some optional outdated feature of human life but an indispensable bulwark of civilization itself. If men do not rule as husbands and providers for their families, they rule the streets in gangs and terrorize the society with their violence.

Although not economic in nature, this persistent problem of family breakdown cast a pall of failure on all the economic triumphs of the 1980s. Both sought and desired by the left as a form of liberation, family breakdown accounted for most of the crime, drug, racial, and other "poverty" problems widely blamed on Reagan policy. Without paternal discipline and role models, teenage boys run amok in nearly all societies.

Most of all, family dissolution was crucial in the single greatest propaganda triumph of the left since the Great Depression: the homeless who haunt all the proud towers of eighties prosperity. Like the Great Depression, which was caused by massive tax and tariff hikes, the homeless problem is a harvest of misguided government: economically favoring divorce and illegitimacy over marriage, deinstitutionalizing the mentally ill, rescinding vagrancy laws, stifling cheap housing with regulations, codes, and controls, and creating a short-order welfare system for millions of disgruntled Americans unable to fill out the forms for AFDC but nonetheless fully able to figure out how to qualify as homeless.

In the morbid feedback loops of liberalism, the answer to such problems is always more government subsidies for homelessness and family breakdown, and thus more propaganda for the enemies of America. As the most gullible of Americans, many intellectuals blamed the homeless on the capitalist successes of the 1980s.

American intellectuals prefer socialist regimes where intellectuals seem to rule, rather than an America where power and status accrue chiefly to the providers of useful goods and services. Typical were the rabble of mindworkers who gathered in Rio at the Environmental Summit of 1992 and leapt to their feet to give a standing ovation to Fidel Castro. Many intellectuals prefer a so-called "society of poets," where most people live in fear and famine (Communist Cuba or Nicaragua), to a society where capitalists surpass intellectuals in income and status.

The single most baffling disappointment of Clinton's career will be his failure to win a majority of women in 1996 after reducing his administration to a comic auxiliary of the Women's Political Caucus in pursuit of their votes.

The 1980s thus gave new impetus to the arguments of *Wealth and Poverty*. But the key theme holding it all together was the moral sources of capitalism, and it was this idea that was generally missed or misconstrued. From William F. Buckley, who debated me on "Firing Line," to Ayn Rand who devoted part of her last speech to denouncing me, to Irving Kristol and Michael Novak, some of my most trusted mentors firmly spurned my idea of a profound affinity between the altruistic themes of the Judeo-Christian tradition and the practical imperatives of supply-side capitalism. Capitalism, as most of my critics insisted, is morally neutral; it accommodates moral behavior and imparts freedoms that are important to moral choices. But in itself capitalism is no more or less moral than any other economic order. Capitalism is a mechanism for accommodating individual tastes and demands. The moral character of those tastes and demands is irrelevant to the system. Capitalism is no more or less moral than an automobile; the moral issue is where and how you drive it.

Ayn Rand, whom I regard to be one of the titans of the history of capitalism and freedom, did uphold the higher morality of the system. But she declared that capitalism is moral not because it fosters the humble service of others, as I contended, but precisely because it rejects humility and service—what Rand considered the craven altruism of Christianity and socialism. In other words, capitalism in Rand's view is moral because it is selfish; it exalts the

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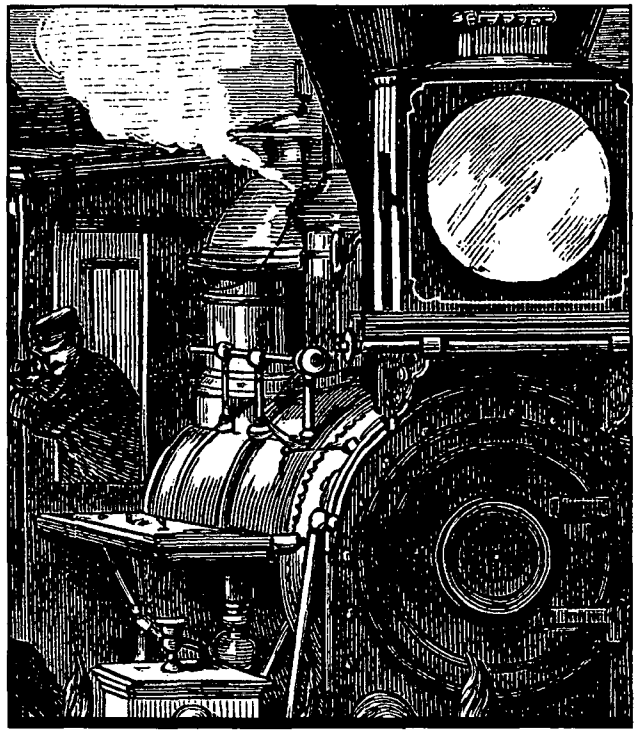
autonomous individual in his quest for heroic stature and achievement.

I agreed with Rand's stress on heroic achievement as the central force of capitalist success. Thus I was gratified to note that the heroic achievers who shine in her novels—from John Galt to Howard Roark and Ragnar Daneskjold—often found themselves upholding a selfishness that seemed as mystically intense and transcendent and as heroically sacrificial as an artist's vision of Jesus on the Cross. No matter how much Rand professed her selfishness, her characters—and her own career—refuted her.

Nonetheless, Rand's identification of socialism with Christianity, as wrong as I believe it to be, sprang from a long and addled infatuation of leading clerics with the worst excesses of the welfare state. She was right about the death-wish socialism of many establishment churches. But she was profoundly wrong in believing that capitalism could prevail by defying all the highest moral traditions and ideals of the world's great religions.



Rand's work had the key virtue of casting the issues in stark relief. My other critics reduced them to a tautological muddle of a self-interest so elastic that it could accommodate nearly any activity at all, from launching a computer revolution to taking an overdose of sleeping pills. On the left and on the right, my critics were confounded by the demand-side fallacy: the false assumption that capitalism is primarily driven by consumer demand. By this standard, anything that excites the desire of consumers to spend is a positive force in economic growth. Since prostitution, divorce, drug addiction, pornography, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, and other forces of social dissolution all increase the purchase of market goods, as opposed to goods provided in the home, all may be said to enhance the rise of the GNP. Thus conservatives and socialists can sometimes come together on social issues. To the extent that both believe the engine of economic growth is driven by greed, they can see permissiveness as favorable to growth under capitalism.

All these views of capitalism are false. Demand, whether avaricious or just, is impotent to impel growth without disciplined, creative, and essentially moral producers of new value. All effective demand ultimately derives from supply; a society's income cannot exceed its output. The output of valuable goods depends not on lechery, exploitation, and license but on varying mixtures of thrift, sacrifice, altruism, creativity, discipline, trust, and faith. To the extent that immorality debauches the moral capital of the society—to the extent that it distracts workers and entrepreneurs from the long-term effort to create new value—these sources of demand actually undermine economic growth.

By a supply-side standard, immorality diverts, obsesses, and depraves the men and women who must forgo immediate returns, sacrifice immediate pleasures, master difficult disciplines, and respond to the needs and desires of others if they are to create successful businesses. I do not say that there are no greedy capitalists, only that the inner dynamic of capitalism is orientation toward the needs of others. Capitalism has been incomparably the most productive economic system in the history of the world because it best evokes the effort and creativity—the moral quality and productive energy—of workers and businessmen who put the needs of others before their own gratifications.

This moral dynamic at the heart of the system drives entrepreneurs constantly to reinvest their profits. Entrepreneurs do not consume their wealth; they recycle it by giving it to other people in productive ways. This means that the very people who have proven their ability to create wealth control the process of future wealth creation. In the form of investments, they endow other entrepreneurs who are judged best able to prevail in the competitions in service that impel the progress of the capitalist economy. All this economic activity is other-directed, as David Riesman observed in the early 1950s. Indeed, it is the altruistic mandate of business and religion that makes them both so offensive to self-centered intellectuals who believe that the self-expression of art and liberated sexuality is the highest form of human activity. Greed is a form of waste that undermines capitalist growth rather than fuels it.

Real greed and selfishness most often cause people to seek short-term comfort and security first. They turn to the state for the benefits that they lacked the moral discipline to earn on their own by serving others. Greed, as I write in *Wealth and Poverty*, leads as by an invisible hand to an ever-growing welfare state—not to wealth and capitalism, but to poverty and socialism. This is the argument I made in my 1982 *American Spectator* article, which I've included in the third chapter of the new edition of *Wealth and Poverty*, and it's an argument that remains critical to the future of all free economies. ❐

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The Liberty Manifesto

by P. J. O'Rourke

The Cato Institute has an unusual political cause—which is no political cause whatsoever. We are here tonight to dedicate ourselves to that cause, to dedicate ourselves, in other words, to . . . nothing.

We have no ideology, no agenda, no catechism, no dialectic, no plan for humanity. We have no "vision thing," as our ex-president would say, or, as our current president would say, we have no Hillary.

All we have is the belief that people should do what people want to do, unless it causes harm to other people. And that had better be clear and provable harm. No nonsense about second-hand smoke or hurtful, insensitive language, please.

I don't know what's good for you. You don't know what's good for me. We don't know what's good for mankind. And it sometimes seems as though we're the only people who don't. It may well be that, gathered right here in this room tonight, are all the people in the world who don't want to tell all the people in the world what to do.

This is because we believe in freedom. Freedom—what this country was established upon, what the Constitution was written to defend, what the Civil War was fought to perfect.

Freedom is not empowerment. Empowerment is what the Serbs have in Bosnia. Anybody can grab a gun and be empowered. It's not entitlement. An entitlement is what people on welfare get, and how free are they? It's not an endlessly expanding list of rights—the "right" to education, the "right" to health care, the "right" to food and housing. That's not freedom, that's dependency. Those aren't rights, those are the rations of slavery—hay and a barn for human cattle.

There is only one basic human right, the right to do as you damn well please. And with it comes the only basic human duty, the duty to take the consequences.

So we are here tonight in a kind of anti-matter protest—an unpolitical undemonstration by deeply uncommitted inactivists. We are part of a huge invisible picket line that circles the White House twenty-four hours a day. We are participants in an enormous non-march on Washington—millions and millions of Americans *not* descending upon the nation's capital in order to demand *nothing* from the United States government. To demand nothing, that is, except the one thing which no government in history has been able to do—leave us alone.

There are just two rules of governance in a free society:

- Mind your own business.
- Keep your hands to yourself.

Bill, keep your hands to yourself. Hillary, mind your own business.

We have a group of incredibly silly people in the White House right now, people who think government works. Or that government *would* work, if you got some real bright young kids from Yale to run it.

We're being governed by dorm room bull session. The Clinton administration is over there right now pulling an all-nighter in the West Wing. They think that, if they can just stay up late enough, they can create a healthy economy and bring peace to former Yugoslavia.

The Clinton administration is going to decrease government spending by increasing the amount of money we give to the government to spend.

Health care is too expensive, so the Clinton administration is putting a high-powered corporate lawyer in charge of making it cheaper. (This is what I always do when I want to spend less money—hire a lawyer from Yale.) If you think health care is expensive now, wait until you see what it costs when it's free.

The Clinton administration is putting together a program so that college graduates can work to pay off their school tuition. As if this were some genius idea. It's called *getting a job*. Most folks do that when they get out of college, unless, of course, they happen to become governor of Arkansas.

And the Clinton administration launched an attack on people in Texas because those people were religious nuts with guns. Hell, this country was *founded* by religious nuts with guns. Who does Bill Clinton think stepped ashore on Plymouth Rock? Peace Corps volunteers? Or maybe the people in Texas were attacked because of child abuse. But, if child abuse was the issue, why didn't Janet Reno tear-gas Woody Allen?

You know, if government were a product, selling it would be illegal.

Government is a health hazard. Governments have killed many more people than cigarettes or unbuckled seat belts ever have.

Government contains impure ingredients—as anybody who's looked at Congress can tell you.

On the basis of Bill Clinton's 1992 campaign promises, I think we can say government practices deceptive advertising.

And the merest glance at the federal budget is enough to convict the government of perjury, extortion, and fraud.

There, ladies and gentlemen, you have the Cato Institute's program in a nutshell: government should be against the law.

Term limits aren't enough. We need jail. ❐

P. J. O'Rourke is the Cato Institute's Mencken research fellow. He delivered these remarks at a May 6 gala dinner celebrating the opening of the Cato Institute's new headquarters in Washington.

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constitutional law	public relations

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Counting the Days

by Terry Eastland

There are many good reasons for the press not to take the pulse of a presidency after its first hundred days—a practice begun when Franklin Delano Roosevelt launched the New Deal upon taking office in 1933. Still, it would have been hard for the press *not* to have examined Bill Clinton's. Clinton asked for the hundred-days treatment when he promised (another campaign vow) "an explosive hundred-day action period" that would be "the most productive . . . in recent history." And on the eve of the century mark his staff tried to spin the press with a celebratory document that somehow left out such bad moments as the failed Baird nomination.

The hundred-day pieces done by both print and broadcast media were generally thorough reviews of the Clinton presidency through April 29. But I could not find the stories, analyses, and columns that begged to be filed. Here are a few:

The FDR Sidebar. A sidebar on the *first* first hundred days would have been helpful—and easy to execute, given the numerous histories of Roosevelt's presidency. Here's what a news consumer needed to know:

Having won by a landslide (57.4 percent of the vote), FDR took office on March 4, 1933, "a time of acute national privation and foreboding that the closing of the banks reinforced," writes Frank Freidel in *Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Rendezvous with Destiny.* In his inaugural, Roosevelt famously declared his belief that "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself." Voicing his intention to ask Congress for legislation to meet the crises of the time, he announced that if Congress did not act, he would, according to Freidel, "ask the Congress for the one remaining instrument to meet the crisis—broad Executive power to wage a war against the emergency, as great as the power that would be given to me if we were in fact invaded by a foreign foe."

Roosevelt did not have to make good on this promise. Immediately he sent Congress an emergency banking measure, which the members passed, despite not having read it; three months later he agreed to a stronger solution, federal insurance of deposits. On March 10, he recommended legislation cutting government salaries and veterans' pensions, which Congress also passed. Then (to quote Freidel again) "dramatically, in helter-skelter fashion, Roosevelt every few days sent Congress a new proposal": March 13, legislation to end Prohibition; March 15, farm legislation; March 21, unemployment relief legislation (which included the Civilian Conservation Corps); March 29, federal securities regulation; April 3, legislation to save farm mortgages from foreclosure; April 10, the Tennessee Valley Authority; May 17, a national industrial recovery bill.

During his first hundred days, says William Leuchtenburg in *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal*, FDR sent fifteen messages to Congress and saw fifteen "historic laws through to final passage"—often with the help of Republicans, whose votes he skillfully sought. Among other key actions taken pursuant to executive authority, he also took the nation off the gold standard.

The sum of Roosevelt's first hundred days was greater than its parts, large as some of them were. His greatest single contribution to the politics of the 1930s was, in Leuchtenburg's words, "the instillation of hope and courage in the people."

FDR and Clinton: Compare and Contrast. Clinton went to Hyde Park early in his first hundred days. He often quoted Roosevelt's 1932 campaign remark about the need for "bold, persistent experimentation." And again, he's the one who built expectations for a Rooseveltian beginning. Needed was a compare-and-contrast piece, along these lines:

Clinton has not been as busy legislatively as Roosevelt was, or nearly as successful. (The defeat by Senate filibuster of his weirdly named "stimulus" bill is evidence that today's senators *do* read). One reason is that, unlike Roosevelt, Clinton did not cultivate Republicans, instead using a one-party strategy; another is that—a fact neglected in many hundred-day stories—Clinton got only 43 percent of the vote in a three-way race. Finally, 1993 is not 1933, there being no "acute national privation and foreboding," i.e., a Great Depression.

Another striking contrast: Bill Clinton on executive power is no FDR: It is hard

Terry Eastland, a resident fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, is the executive editor of the new Forbes MediaGuide Quarterly.

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to imagine the post-Watergate Congress giving any president "broad executive power to wage war against the emergency," even if there was an emergency. And already—in a development noted only by the *Wall Street Journal*'s Robert L. Bartley on March 25—Clinton has acted the part of the weak executive, signing on, for example, to a new independent counsel law.

While Clinton is Rooseveltian in one political sense—his programs would enlarge the constituency dependent upon government—he is not in another: He has not transformed himself, as Roosevelt did, from (in Freidel's words) "an ambiguous figure seeming to possess more charm than backbone" into a "confident, commanding president." Where FDR ended his first hundred days signing new legislation and preparing to enforce it, Clinton found himself, as a *New York Times* headline put it, trying "To Focus His Goals and Sharpen his Staff," as his approval ratings declined and disapprovals went up.

The Clinton Delusion. I move now to the op-ed page (although what I'm about to suggest could have been fleshed out in one of those pieces the *New York Times* calls "news analysis"). In a hundred-day-mark interview with *U.S. News & World Report*, Clinton complained that Roosevelt had had two advantages over him: FDR didn't have to take office until March ("he got a hugely greater time to get started"), and the people were more receptive to him because "one in four people were [sic] unemployed." True, the Constitution having been changed, Clinton took office six weeks before FDR did. But who, other than Clinton, believes this wee bit of extra time would have facilitated a faster start? He should be thankful for small favors: as it was, Clinton's inaugural on January 20 saved him from a transition that was already spinning out of control.

As for the people's "receptivity," which is to say the Great Depression that made such receptivity possible, it would seem that the very lack of a similar national emergency should have warned Clinton off making extravagant predictions about his first hundred days. Surely Clinton knew this, just as surely as he knew that the electorate today differs from that of the 1930s in other important ways, as Columbia University historian Henry Graff explained in *Newsweek*:

> It is more eruptive, more skeptical of political leadership, and, fed a daily diet of print and electronic commentary, it is better informed and more fragmented. . . . Significantly, society is also less trusting of governmental authority—or any other authority. The democratic right to criticize has metamorphosed into the need to criticize—incessantly and angrily.

Was Clinton, the voracious reader, unaware of these developments? Or did he (my explanation) know of them, but refuse to allow them to undermine his belief ("I'm from a place called Hope") that he could be another Roosevelt?[1]

In the wake of Clinton's negative press, quite positive stories about his spouse began appearing. "Hillary Rodham Clinton," the *Post*'s media writer Howard Kurtz reported on May 8, "is engaged in a media offensive that is being conducted very much on her terms." A cynic might think that Hillary was trying to take advantage of Bill while he's down; a public-relations analyst would say that Hillary was trying to get good press before unveiling her bound-to-be-controversial (and costly) health-care plan. Both could be true. In any event, Kurtz's piece shows that HRC and her press people gained what they wanted by following this rule: grant interviews to friendly reporters, and force others to submit in writing the questions they would ask were they so lucky as to be granted time with the First Lady. It's the first group that got access, of course, but how to judge their work?

The most charitable answer is: new blood is needed on this beat (even if that means the First Lady quits granting interviews). Having filed glowing pieces on HRC for the past year, *Time*'s Margaret Carlson, a former Carter administration official who has trouble separating her politics from her journalism, was given access. Her cover story asked: "Hillary Rodham Clinton is the most powerful First Lady in history. Does anybody have a problem with that?" The problem

[1] Finally, as we go to press, *Newsweek*'s Robert Samuelson has written a column in the May 24 issue pointing out that Bill Clinton is *not* FDR.

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everybody should have is *Time*'s preference for hagiography over journalism. Carlson treats lightly the closed-door meetings of the health-care task force. She virtually neglects Hillary's role as the administration's diversity commissioner. And is HRC really, as Carlson writes, "the icon of American womanhood"?

Or consider the *Post*'s Martha Sherrill, long on the HRC beat. Sherrill wrote a front-page Style section piece that sought to probe "Hillary Clinton's Inner Politics." Another journalistic genuflection: Bill may be doing poorly, but Hillary's doing great. She has "warmth" and "charm"—even "gravitas"! Sherrill focused in particular on HRC's April 6 speech at the University of Texas—her "politics of meaning" speech. I've read that speech. It is the speech of a college sophomore, full of what columnist Charles Krauthammer called "adolescent self-discovery." It deserved a tougher look than Sherrill gave it. At some point, the Hillary Journalism (most of it written by women) needs a thorough review—though don't expect such an effort to win a Pulitzer.

• • •

I've now written this column since President *Bush*'s first hundred days—which is to say, I've written it for more than 1,500 (fifty-four consecutive issues)—a record, as I see it, nearly on the order of Lou Gehrig's. But now the time has come for me to yield this department, as I will be editing the *Forbes MediaGuide Quarterly*. To debut this fall, the quarterly will evaluate the print and broadcast news media according to the traditional standards of accuracy, balance, fairness, depth of insight, and (for opinion pieces) the quality of the arguments. The quarterly also will report stories that journalism has ignored or for other reasons failed to cover.

My new assignment will chart new territory, and it promises to be some adventure. But readers of this space should know that I am not leaving the pages of this magazine, the first to publish me (you can look it up—June 1975: "The Amazing Grace of C.S. Lewis"). I'll be back, and often, writing on the presidency, legal issues, the courts, maybe even a journalist or two—and whatever else needs the eye of this American spectator. ❐

PRESSWATCH (II)

In God They Trust

by John Corry

What is the religious right, and who are its members? The answers grow elusive. The media had always known about Pat Robertson, of course, but now there were John Cardinal O'Connor and goodness knows who else, all joined as co-conspirators. Obviously, the citizenry had to be warned. As the "CBS Evening News" somberly noted the week before the community school board elections in New York, "Voter apathy elsewhere has led to victory by the religious right." Then, two nights before the elections, CBS grew somber again. The elections, it said, will be a "big test for the religious right."

What first alarmed CBS, and indeed almost everyone else in big media, was the intrusion of Robertson's Christian Coalition into New York's official culture. The coalition had had the temerity to send questionnaires to the candidates for the 288 positions on the city's thirty-two community school boards, asking them how they stood on some moral issues. Then the Catholic Archdiocese of New York had had the audacity to help distribute the pamphlets in which the coalition reported the answers. Neither the coalition nor the archdiocese actually endorsed any candidates, but there was no telling what they might do next. Even on election day, the *New York Times* was still worried. In an editorial, it warned about "the potentially destructive involvement of the religious right."

Thus Cardinal O'Connor and Pat Robertson were officially joined, along with all the benighted parents who thought it a bad idea to teach fourth-graders about condoms and spermicidal creams. The religious right was anyone opposed to the enlightened ideas of Joseph Fernandez, the schools chancellor. Fernandez himself was clear about that. As he told the presumably shocked listeners of National Public Radio, "This is a highly organized group of the extreme religious right wing." The schools chancellor was mincing no words. The sissy *Times* and CBS might have thought it was only the "religious right," but he knew it was "extreme."

Pause now for some background: The community school boards were legislated into law in 1969 after the counter-culture chanted "Power to the people," and progressive politicians responded. Even the most progressive politician may now admit, however, that the community boards did not always attract the best people. Nine members of a board in the Bronx, for example, have been arrested on various charges since 1988, while a board in Brooklyn recently named as "principal of the year" a man once indicted for grand larceny. Meanwhile, the bribing of board members for jobs in school districts has become almost routine. None of this, however, ever attracted much attention in the national media.

But corruption is one thing, and the higher morality is another. The first is a one-day story, but the second is a cause. In 1991, Fernandez proposed the distribution of free condoms in high schools. Even students whose parents objected would be able to get them. New York's

John Corry, our new Presswatch columnist, is a former New York Times *media critic. His book* My Times: Adventures in the News Trade *will be published by Putnam next winter.*

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central school board, which stood above all the community boards, approved Fernandez's proposal with a four-to-three vote. Then Fernandez recommended a new curriculum in AIDS education. Fourth-graders would get the dope on the spermicidal creams and condoms, while fifth graders would learn about the mechanics of oral and anal sex. This time the central board balked, and when it did the New York press got upset. The *Times* even advanced the novel argument that the central school board was interfering in the school system.

All this, however, was only prelude. The true higher morality showed itself only after Fernandez introduced the now-famous Rainbow Curriculum. Its stated aim was to teach children about different cultures—multicultural diversity—with one of the cultures being that of gay men and lesbian women. It was not quite clear what kind of culture this was, or indeed whether gays and lesbians really had one; but whatever it was, it was to become a part of "all curricular areas" in the public schools. The big idea was to get to the kids early. Instruction would start with first-graders, and God forbid anyone should call it proselytizing.

There is no point in delineating everything in the controversy that followed, but it must be noted that a community board in Queens told Fernandez to take his Rainbow Curriculum and shove it, and that the members of the community board were predominantly Catholic. The press began to see the outlines of a plot. The *Times* reported that Cardinal O'Connor planned to officiate at the wedding of a member of the central board who had objected to the Rainbow Curriculum. It also pointed out that two lawyers who represented the apostate board in Queens had once worked for the archdiocese. A whiff of papism hung in the air. Who would be the first editorial writer to recall rum, Romanism, and rebellion?

In fact, big media has always suspected that the Catholic clergy does not recognize the separation of church and state, and should be watched closely, although there is an inconsistency in how this is done. Few columnists or commentators become distressed when Catholic bishops make liberal pronouncements on disarmament, say, or foreign policy. Pronouncements on faith or morals, though, can upset them. Cardinal O'Connor has often been reprimanded for speaking out about homosexuality or abortion. When he criticized Mario Cuomo for his views on abortion, for example, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. wrote a *Times* op-ed piece warning him to watch out. O'Connor, Schlesinger said, seemed to be confirming "the fears long cherished by the No-Nothings [sic] in the 1850s, the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s, and a succession of anti-Catholic demagogues that the Roman Catholic Church would try to overrule the American democratic process." A *Times* editorial earlier had said much the same thing. It warned Catholic bishops about being too pushy in the exercise of their faith. It said they might destroy "the truce of tolerance" they had been granted by other Americans. The bishops, apparently, operate only under sufferance. Unlike

ministers, rabbis, or imams, they were best seen but not heard.

Meanwhile, the previously unimaginable was taking place in New York. Emboldened by the stand of the community school board in Queens, parents elsewhere in the city began to make noise. They did not like the Rainbow Curriculum or the free distribution of condoms, either. Subsequently, the central school board did the right thing. Fernandez's contract as schools chancellor was to expire in June, but the board voted not to renew it. This was no small act of bravery on the board's part. Press, politicians, and the chattering classes all supported Fernandez. *New York Newsday* said the schools chancellor had been "guillotined," and the *Times* demanded that everyone on the central board be ousted. Fernandez was a secular saint done in by the forces of darkness, and attention had to be paid. ABC's "World News Tonight" named Fernandez its "Person of the Week," and praised his moral courage. ABC did not make it clear what Fernandez had been so morally courageous about, but it managed to suggest somehow that he was right up there with Gandhi and Schweitzer.

You must understand the media guidelines under which stories like this are covered. A principal one is that if the religious right is on one side, then everyone else must be on the other. There is seldom a middle ground, and so semantic problems abound. The usually impeccable Robert MacNeil introduced a "MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour" report on the school-board controversy by calling it a battle between the "Christian right and liberals," but that did not do. Some liberals were uncomfortable with the Rainbow Curriculum, too. The Rev. Al Sharpton, one of the city's reigning clown princes, was quoted as saying it was the "religious white" and not the religious right, but that never caught on.

Meanwhile, local television commentators, or maybe Bryant Gumbel, often tried to encapsulate the ideological factors by identifying Pat Robertson as an "ultra-conservative." This, however, always left them with the problem of what to call Cardinal O'Connor. Sometimes they solved this with a quick verbal reference to Robertson, followed by a mere visual reference to O'Connor. The difficulty here, of course, was oversimplification, compounded by the fact that Robertson was not in New York. ABC once went with "the Christians and the liberals," but surely there had to be at least some liberal Christians, and so that didn't do it, either.

Thus, the battleground became confused. The question of who opposed whom was a puzzler. There might have been some light shed, though, during the gay, lesbian, and bisexual march in Washington, which took place at the same time as the school battle in New York. The incomparable C-Span showed us the orators who spoke that day at the Mall. One of the fieriest was identified as Urvashi Vaid, an attorney. Ms. Vaid attacked the far right, theocracy, and all the other usual things, and then let go with a dark indictment. "Our opponents," she said, "believe in monotheism." Maybe, you thought, she had something. ❐

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Roots

by Benjamin J. Stein

Tuesday

I don't like this at all. I awoke this morning with a pain in a rear upper tooth. The pain had been coming on for two weeks, but this morning it really hurt as I gargled Scope and drank my cold orange juice.

After lunch, I drove out to my dentist, far away in the Valley, in a washed-out, depressing area called Reseda. I have been coming here for years, and lately the area has started to resemble East Berlin. I don't know why. Despair, I guess. Anyway, the dentist, his hygienist, and the X-ray technician all took turns at my tooth. Then the dentist, a wonderful guy named John Stewart, whose daughter, Vicki, used to work as a messenger for me long ago, brought me the bad news.

"This looks like root canal," he said gravely. "We've got a good endodontic man in the building. I'll see if he can see you."

A moment later, he announced that Alan S., a surgeon of endodontic dentistry whom I had last seen seven years ago, would see me immediately. With heavy heart I took the elevator upstairs. I've had root canal. They call it "root canal" for a good reason. It's serious. I walked into the office of Dr. S. His nurse, a grim-looking woman, said, "Welcome to the torture chamber," and then gave a fiendish laugh. That made me feel better, until I learned how they test to see if you have a root canal "issue."

The endodontic surgeon takes a little pencil of SOLID, INCREDIBLY COLD ICE and PRESSES IT AGAINST YOUR TOOTH UNTIL YOU SCREAM. Then, he takes it away and tells you to count how long until it stops raging in pain. If it's longer than five seconds, bro', you need root canal.

I needed root canal.

The nurse who had greeted me watched as Dr. S. shot a huge needle into my upper jaw, moved it around, and laid in the turbocaine right against the jawbone.

"Ow," I said through my AIDS-proof bib as the needle went in.

"Hey, no pain, no gain," said Dr. S. cheerily.

As the anesthetic sunk in, I started to feel nauseated. "I feel sick," I said to the nurse. "Well, you can't be," she said. "You're just afraid."

She was certainly half right, so I allowed the doctor to begin his work. As he did, I thought about how much time and suffering had elapsed since I last saw Dr. S. When I last saw him, I was living with my wife. We had never even contemplated a close relationship in court with Joan Rivers Rosenberg and her many friends. I had thought little about Michael Milken. I was still on good terms with the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page. I knew nothing about stock market crashes or real estate collapses. I felt rich.

On the other hand, I had never enjoyed the mysteries of Journey into Self-Obsession, had not become a Movie Star, and most of all, had not met little Mister Delicious Perfect, Tommy Angel Face Stein.

Anyway, as I thought about this, and about how root canal surgery is really a lot better than being in a deposition, doing legal research, or being on ninety percent of dates, Dr. S. said, "You know, it's really funny, but I just saw you in *Honeymoon in Vegas*, and I was thinking that I'd like to see you again, and I guess just my thinking about you brought you in here."

God, I hope not.

Here's how a root canal works. The surgeon drills out your tooth, doing his best to remove all of the living veins, tissue, pulp, and nerve in the three canals. Then he takes little flexible drill things and manually plunges them in and out of your mouth like a horrifyingly personal tooth roto-rooter. When he's done, you can see the drills he has used laid out neatly on a tray, still dripping with what was recently the living tissue inside your tooth. Isn't that a lot better than waiting in line at the airport?

Benjamin J. Stein is a writer, lawyer, economist, and actor living in Malibu, California.

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"You're taking this really well," Dr. S. said.

"Only on the outside," I grunted through my rubber bib.

On the way back to town, I picked up my messages. Yeah! A great one from my acting agent telling me that I'm wanted to do two beer commercials next week. Oh, happy, happy day. I'll take the endodontic surgery any time if I can get to do a commercial afterwards. That's what acting's like.

Thursday

A "table read" for the movie in which I have a small part, a gem called *North*. I arrived at The Culver Studios and wandered over to the stage where we're reading. Rob Reiner, the director, spotted me. He steered me over to a man and said, "Ben, this is Bruce Willis. Do you guys know each other?"

Bruce looked at me cheerily, took my hand, and went back to talking to Jon Lovitz, an incredibly funny guy from "Saturday Night Live." Then I found a seat at a huge square table, actually many smaller tables arranged around a square, and went to find a soda.

When I came back, my script had been moved. I asked a woman where it was. "We moved it," Kathy Bates said with a smile. "My family is sitting here."

Oh. Her family turned out to be an amazingly interesting actor named Abe Vigoda, so it was all right.

Anyway, we read our parts, and this movie is obviously going to make about $10 billion, so I'm pretty happy to have my little part.

After the table read, there was an almost unbelievably lavish luncheon. Sliced salmon, steak, swordfish, salads of many kinds, yum, yum, yum.

When I used to work at the Federal Trade Commission, lo these twenty years ago, I occasionally had to eat all by my lonesome self at a place called The Fatted Calf. It was a cafeteria-style hamburger place on 12th Street. It was filled with civil servants drinking stealthily at lunch. I was only 27, and I truly thought my life was over.

Then times changed and I got to eat at stage two at The Culver Studios a few seats down from Rob Reiner and Bruce Willis. This makes much more sense.

Tuesday

A commercial for a beer. Actually, two commercials. I'm the star. I get to stand on a platform next to a beautiful woman in a sarong and talk about rough drafts and smooth drafts. I get to stand on a simulated street corner with a saxophonist playing to the moon.

Best of all, I get to have company and stand around between takes and talk to everyone. I love that. I love it a lot. I'm lonely too much of the time.

At lunch, I walked over to a swell old Hollywood restaurant called The Hollywood Canteen and had a spectacular cheeseburger while I watched fish swim in a tank. Everyone at the counter was animated, cheery, un-sulking. Happy. This is the way it's supposed to be.

By the way, I think Bill Clinton and Robert Reich should take a walk over to our set. It runs so smoothly, with so little friction and so much enthusiasm, and produces such a smooth, finished draft of

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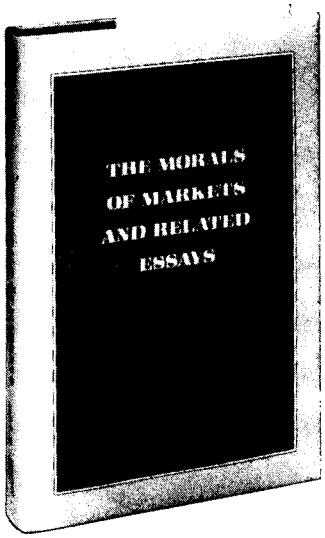

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a commercial that the Japanese would commit hara-kiri in envy. This is a bit of America that still works.

Saturday

Surprise! I'm in the First Class cabin of the one p.m. flight from Los Angeles to New York. I'm on my way to Dublin, Ireland, to be involved in something. I can't tell you what it is right now.

The First Class cabin is great today, though. It's all actors, and mostly child actors at that. Across the aisle, there's the little boy who played in *Lorenzo's Oil*, with his Mom. Then there's a fellow who played in *Dennis the Menace*. Then there are three kids who were just in a cereal commercial. Then there's, oh, what's-his-name . . . Gregory Peck. That's it. Then, right behind in business class, there's Dina Merrill. She comes from old money, so they say, so she's more sensible. With her, in business class, are a veritable raft of parents of the cereal commercial kids. The deal is that if they fly business, both can come, but if they fly first, then only one can come.

The kids are bouncing balls, playing cards, yelling and screaming and having a good time. Plus, they keep coming to me and asking for advice and autographs. I heard one kid say to his mother, "Hey, I got Ben Stein's autograph and Gregory Peck's."

"Hold onto Gregory Peck's," I told him.

We landed in New York. By a great stroke of luck, my limo driver (well, what did you think, dahling?) was a former Irish priest who had lots of good suggestions about Ireland and what to see in Dublin. This is swell. Plus, in my hotel room, there was a surprise platter of desserts that J., a woman who has a mad crush on me, had ordered to greet me in Fun City.

Sweet, sweet dreams.

Sunday

Lunch with two old friends at a restaurant on the East Side. They told me about all of their famous friends from Martha's Vineyard and Manhattan. They told me hilarious stories about law. Hey, how come I don't have any rich friends? How come I don't know any famous people?

Oh, wait a minute. What about Bob Tyrrell? What about Nixon? What about Peter Flanigan? They count, even if they're never in Liz Smith.

Then, off to JFK with my lapsed priest/driver.

"I wonder what the stewardesses on Aer Lingus will be like?" I asked.

"Bitches probably," he said angrily, and I decided to drop that subject.

Aer Lingus was great. They don't have first class to Dublin, because, as a stewardess explained, they found that most of the passengers were airline employees riding free. But Aer Lingus business class was superb. More salmon. More and more salmon. Friendly stewardesses. A sappy but touching movie called *Forever Young*. And then the morning sky above Shannon.

Shannon has become a major stopover for flights between Brighton Beach, Brooklyn, and Moscow. It's

amazing how many Russians were milling around the terminal. Is anyone left in Russia? I called my wife from the lounge, and then got back on for my flight from Shannon to Dublin, all of twenty minutes. There was no Customs in Dublin, just a cab ride through dense traffic to my hotel, The Westbury, a moment of contemplation, and then eight hours of sleep.

Then, a walk around St. Stephen's Green, a lovely but amazingly littered park, and then dinner at the Shelbourne with two famous guys. I strolled back to my hotel and then looked out the window at the revelers on Grafton Street. I missed my Devil Boy. I missed my Trixie. I missed my wife. Well, estranged wife. But sleep came along to save the moment, as it so often has, and will in the end, as well.

In the middle of the night, I was awakened by girlish voices on the street below my window. There, six floors down, were two Irish lasses, talking excitedly, smoking a big fat marijuana cigarette, whose smoke reached up into my open window.

Monday

A stroll around Dublin. First down Grafton Street a few steps to Bewley's Cafe. In New York, my lapsed priest driver had told me that Bewley's was a great favorite of the crowd who were in the Irish chapters of Journey into Self-Obsession. Sure enough, the diners had the same crazed, intense, fearful look I've come to know so well. I sagely took a table far from the other patrons, ate my little lunch, and marveled at how well self-obsession travels.

Then over to the Shelbourne for a fabulously good haircut for a mere six pounds, or about ten bucks. While the barber cut, I read an article about Ireland's hundred richest families. Hmmm. They didn't seem that rich. Much richer than I am, but not billionaires, like the folks I see noshing night after night at Morton's.

Then down Nassau Street and into Trinity College, Dublin. Now, this is pay dirt. Dublin has an amazing number of beautiful women, and there are a dense core of them in Trinity College. Pale skin. Lank hair. Regular, clean features. I know this shows: (a) gender condescension; (b) beauty discrimination; (c) implicit, concealed sexual harassment. Still, I love them all.

I mentally prosecuted myself, convicted myself, and went on my way past the Book of Kells, the Long Hall, the Green, the Buttery, and still I could not help noticing how many beautiful women there were. Girls, I would call them, if I weren't afraid of meeting the Hollywood Women's Action Committee OGPU at three a.m., with Vishinskaya Hill in the lead.

But, as I smiled at the girls, praying that they would recognize me from *Ferris Bueller*, I was simply ignored. To

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them I was just another middle-aged tourist with a hat and a raincoat. This is life, I suddenly realized. I used to be invincible on campus. Girls flocked around me. Now I'm invisible. From invincible to invisible. The story of life.

Age. That's the enemy. Not the national debt.

Anyway, then off to the National Gallery of Art, and then to dinner with Irishmen. Then to sleep, to dream about when girls paid attention.

At about five a.m., as a pale blue was breaking across the Dublin sky towards the house of parliament, the phone rang. I groggily answered it. On the line was L., a middle-aged friend who's an "artist" in Los Angeles.

L. was excited. "What time is it in Dublin?" she asked.

"Five in the morning," I said.

"Well, it's only nine at night here," she said. "Listen, I'm so excited. I just got my biggest commission for a painting ever."

"Great," I said warily.

"It's for the Goldbergs. You know, they own practically half of Beverly Hills."

"I guess I don't know them," I said.

"They're practically royalty," she said.

"Great."

"Anyway, they asked me to paint their grandparents' faces on the ceiling of their bathroom. And it's a big bathroom."

"You're kidding."

"No, I'm not kidding at all," she said. "It's a lot of money, and it's a challenge. I think it's going to be hard to paint on the ceiling, and have it be really memorable, but I figure if Michelangelo could do it, I can do it."

"But Michelangelo was a unique genius."

"Listen, you'd be surprised at what you can do if you really need the money. I'll make it look really old and weird, like the Sistine Chapel."

"I don't think that the genius of Michelangelo was to make the angels look old and weird," I said.

"So you don't think I can do it?" she asked. "You'll see. It'll be like Michelangelo, only better, because it'll be with a bubble jet. Where there's a will, there's a way."

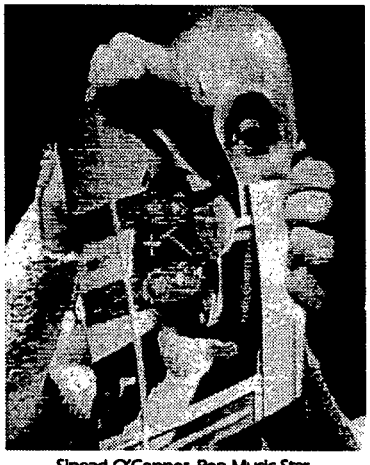
And people say Americans have lost their spirit.

Thursday

Back to America. Last night in Dublin I was told my services wouldn't be needed for a few weeks, so I'm headed back home. I made a rushed reservation to fly to London on Aer Lingus and thence to Washington, D.C., on the Concorde. I got up very early and packed, then took a taxi to the airport. I felt really sad to leave Ireland, as I headed over the River Liffey, up McConnell Street, past the Gresham and the Abbey Theatre. I hope I get to come back soon.

The Dublin Airport was jammed with travelers. At the gate was a mob of American wrestlers from the World Wrestling Federation. They were huge, monstrous-looking men. Some of them were rude, too, swaggering up and down, cursing and showing off their muscles. Plus, the plane was delayed for almost two hours. Yuck. I slept in my chair, awakened occasionally by the swearing of a wrestler behind me. What a picture of America.

On the plane, though, I sat across from a very polite wrestler named T. He was a blond, extremely muscular fellow from Georgia. He kept calling me "sir" and told



Sinead O'Connor, Pop Music Star,
Saturday Night Live, 1992.

VS.

Theresa Wolfe, Student,
Christendom in Rome, Summer of 1992.

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me how much he liked my necktie. He told me he was trained as an economist, and he quickly found that he could maximize his utility by working as a wrestler instead of an economist. "My Dad's an ob-gyn, and I make more than he does, working twenty minutes a night."

"On the other hand, you have to travel," I said.

"True, and I also have to spend about four hours a day in the gym," he added.

I like it a lot. An economist turned wrestler. This is even better than a Las Vegas publicist/columnist turned economist.

In London, I had to transfer from Terminal One to Terminal Four, a distance of six miles by ancient bus, to get to the International Building. Then I shopped, ate delicious smoked salmon, and hung out at the Concorde Lounge. London to Washington, D.C., in three-and-a-half hours. I liked it a lot. I imagined the glamorous fellow travelers, more cultured than Alger Hiss, the movie stars, the plutocrats . . .

The reality was somewhat different. The Concorde, as everyone knows, has a small, cramped cabin, which was just fine. But it also had a huge, Li'l Abner–type hillbilly in coveralls sitting in front of me. (What's he doing here?) There was also a screaming little girl across the row. (How can her parents afford it?)

The food service was abysmal. The worst coach food in America is better than what we got on the Concorde. Boiled, tasteless chicken. The flight attendants were almost comically rude. A male attendant smashed his cart into my elbow and then laughed. A female attendant wouldn't speak to me or give me dessert after I caught her snitching my souvenir Concorde briefcase and asked for it back. Then, the male flight attendant just dropped my souvenir pen on my lap while I was sleeping, laughed again, and went on his way. The plane ran out of towels, and was so hot that Pigpen in front of me took off his shirt and sat in his undershirt for the last two hours. On landing, it got so hot that the crew had to open the catering door so we could breathe.

All in all, British Air has some work to do on this airplane. Maybe the craft can't be fixed, but it should be back to the drawing board for the staff. I wonder if I can sue . . . ❐

POLITICS

What to Filibuster Next?

by Grover G. Norquist

Republican leader Bob Dole's successful defense of the taxpayers against President Clinton's $16.5 billion stimulus package has convinced congressional Republicans, moderate Democrats, the business community, and the American people that the tax-and-spend Blitzkrieg that appeared unstoppable after Clinton's State of the Union speech can be counterattacked. Before Dole kept forty-three Republicans together to filibuster for twenty-three days, the conventional wisdom in Washington was that the Clinton plan was certain to pass in its entirety. The Democrats maintained strong majorities in the House and Senate and they had a congressional leadership willing to demand and enforce party unity.

True, Clinton had won only 43 percent of the national electorate, but the national media beat the drum of "mandate" and spoke dreamily of a "return to Camelot." Even the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, for more than a decade the stalwart defender of Reaganomics, embraced Clinton and abandoned its traditional "no tax hike" position.[1] The Republican filibuster stopped Clinton's momentum, forcing a detour and even a retreat. Democratic dissenters who criticized the spending package have been rewarded with popular support in the press.

Three factors came together to make the filibuster succeed. First, as Texas Senator Phil Gramm noted, it allowed Republicans to recapture the issue on which they built their electoral successes—opposition to taxes and spending. Even the so-called Republican moderates in the Senate, such as Rhode Island's John Chaffee, Vermont's Jim Jeffords, Minnesota's David Durenberger, and Pennsylvania's Arlen Specter, find unadulterated pork-barrel deficit spending offensive.

Second, Dole kept the party together through constant consultation with the Republican Conference, going back to members whenever the White House shifted its position. Dole was helped by a suggestion from Senator John Warner of Virginia that all forty-three Republicans send a letter to the president that put on record their opposition to a spending package that did not "pay for itself" through reduced spending elsewhere.

Finally, West Virginia Democrat Robert Byrd helped forge Republican unity by dealing Oregon's Mark Hatfield, the leading Republican "budget dove," out of the process; stiff-arming Republicans on the Appropriations Committee; and using his parliamentary skill to design an "amendment tree" that effectively prohibited any meaningful amendment from getting onto the floor of the Senate. (Byrd's technique is the functional equivalent of the "closed rule" that the House leadership regularly uses to

[1] See Daniel Wattenberg's "Clinton's Echo Chamber" in last month's *TAS*. After Wattenberg's article went to press, National Empowerment Television, a fledgling fifth network with programming produced by the Free Congress Foundation and chaired by William Bennett, aired a satellite show on the Chamber sellout, in the course of which Chamber Foundation President Bob Krieble and board member Richard Rahn resigned. The Chamber has since cautiously begun to oppose parts of the Clinton tax hike.

Grover G. Norquist is president of Americans for Tax Reform.

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ram legislation through without requiring Democrats to vote on amendments that might not play well back in the district.)

When Congress broke for the Easter recess, in the middle of the filibuster, the White House was offering a reduced package of only $10 billion, with $6 billion to be paid for with promised reductions. In an effort to pressure Republican moderates, President Clinton flew to Pennsylvania to publicly attack Senator Arlen Specter for not supporting his wonderful spending program, which included pork for Pennsylvania. In concert with the White House, unions asked their staffs to lobby Specter and other, presumably wavering Senate moderates.

But in fact, the Easter recess sealed the spending plan's fate. Senator Dole's chief of staff Sheila Burke said that members returned strengthened in their opposition to the spending package. What happened? Over the Easter break, House Republicans, under the leadership of Tom DeLay of Texas, organized twenty-four simultaneous "town hall" meetings to discuss the deficit spending package. DeLay reported back to his fellow House members that at two of the town hall meetings, hecklers sent by the Democratic Party to speak out in favor of the spending package came up afterwards and apologized, chagrined at what they had learned about the pork included in the spending package. According to Gramm, who attended one of those town hall meetings in (surprise) New Hampshire with Rep. Bill Zeliff, "This plan was not defeated in the Senate, but in discussions around the kitchen tables of America."

When the Senate reconvened, the White House—going around the Senate Democrats—offered a vastly scaled down compromise of $6.5 in spending, with $2.5 billion to be paid with spending cuts elsewhere. Fortified by conversations with their constituents, not a single Republican would budge. The deficit-spending "stimulus" bill was dead.

Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky points out that in a $6 trillion economy with a $300 billion deficit, the saving of $16 billion in wasteful spending is not important substantively but very important symbolically. "With forty-three Republican senators," McConnell notes, "you may not have forty-one senators together on a whole lot of filibusters, so it pays to pick your fights."

McConnell thinks Republicans should focus on blocking those initiatives of the Democrats that would change the rules to stack the deck against Republicans. Two power grabs are planned. First is the Striker Replacement bill, which would strengthen union leaders by making it illegal for struck employers to hire replacement workers. This reform would permanently shift the balance in favor of labor unions that today rake in an average of more than $400 per union member each year.

Second is a "campaign finance reform" that would limit how much a candidate for representative or senator can spend. This hurts challengers, who, unlike incumbents, do not have a federal salary of $140,000 to live on while they campaign full-time—not to mention a large staff. McConnell calls the proposal

"food stamps for politicians" and wonders if the American people really want to set up an entitlement program that grants politicians "vouchers for broadcast and newspaper ads, preferential mail and broadcast rates; and bonus money if one's opponent rejects the 'voluntary limits.'"

The Democratic reform package leaves intact the loophole allowing unlimited use of compulsory union dues for politics—despite workers' wishes and a Supreme Court decision to the contrary. (George Bush had issued an executive order putting some teeth in the court's decision; Bill Clinton quietly revoked it one January evening, after the White House communications office had announced that there would be no more news that day.)

Because of the special rules on the budget, the filibuster weapon is denied to Dole and his party in the fight against the reconciliation bill—Clinton's general spending and tax increase program. To defeat the general tax package, Senate Republicans will try first to strip out the energy (Btu) tax and the tax on Social Security. The loss of revenue ($102 billion) would send Clinton back to the drawing board. Should both taxes survive amendment efforts, the Republican strategy will need fifty-one votes to kill the whole bill. While there are a couple of possibilities among Democrats, the chances of finding seven defectors to go with the forty-four Republicans (optimistically counting Kay Bailey Hutchison as the new senator from Texas) aren't good.

On the other hand, the filibuster can be applied to Hillary Clinton's attempt to nationalize the 14 percent of the economy that comprises the health-care industry. Senator Gramm suggests that the Republicans could lay out a set of principles for health-care reform that any proposal would have to meet. These might include requirements that citizens maintain their right to choose their own hospital and doctor and that taxes not be raised. Failure to meet those principles would then engender a filibuster—one that might well be joined by moderate Democrats.

The April filibuster had benefits beyond encouraging future filibusters. As Newt Gingrich points out, "It forced President Clinton onto national television virtually every night to personally be seen lobbying for more spending instead of deficit reduction." This was a torpedo into Clinton campaign strategist James Carville's goal of wooing Perot-voting deficit hawks to the Democratic fold. The publicity given the budget proposal of Ohio Republican John Kasich, which would have cut $430 billion over five years without raising taxes, made the Clinton package look amateurish. The DeLay-sponsored town hall meetings on April 17 were a forum for senators as well as House members and will be repeated on June 19, in a format focusing on the entire Clinton package. A Senate staffer calculates that there have been more Republican House/Senate leadership meetings this year than in the past ten years. Gingrich calls the House-Senate cooperation "the best I have seen."

Finally, the Dole-led filibuster was a cheerful reminder that good policy is good politics. The nation seems well pleased with Dole's more aggressive leadership—and we're all at least $16 billion less poor. ❐

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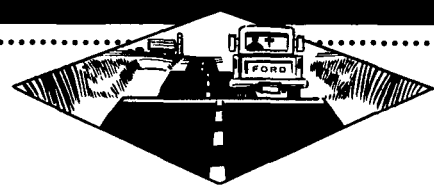

The Hate State

by Dave Shiflett

Denver

When the Colorado Rockies opened their first homestand at Mile High Stadium on April 9 (Good Friday, as was pointed out with varying degrees of horror and glee), President Bill Clinton was absent. Many had hoped that Bill, known in baseball circles as "Nookie Dog," would throw out the historic first pitch—picture him on the mound, scanning the stands for any sets of uncrossed legs before letting go a fastball—but according to *Rocky Mountain News* society columnist Bill Husted, the president may have backed out in order to keep solidarity with gay activists, who called for a tourist and business boycott of Colorado after state voters approved Amendment 2 last November, which bans laws giving protected status to homosexuals.

This sounds like the discreet sort of warfare Bill might volunteer for; if so, he joins other prominent Americans who have sworn not to set foot in the Hate State (as Colorado is now known in some circles) until the initiative is repealed. Among them: James Taylor, Whoopi Goldberg, Barbra Streisand, the Kennedy family (who skied in Utah over Christmas to show their willingness to sacrifice), and the city governments of San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, and Atlanta (where homosexual and heterosexual sodomy can still get you jailed).

Various ACLU chapters have also taken the no-hate pledge, along with several convention groups, including the big-spending National Organization for Women. Martina Navratilova, the famous lesbian tennis player, Aspen resident, and woman of a hard, biker sort of beauty, threatened to move. A speaking invitation to Connie Chung was withdrawn after a local network rep said he could not, in good conscience, ask this most influential of personages to appear in Colorado and thus seem to take sides in the debate. The *Denver Post* reported that columnist Anna Quindlen is also avoiding the state, though her column continues to be distributed in Colorado copies of the *New York Times*, which editorially endorsed the boycott. Many Coloradans await word on how former Colorado resident Roseanne Barr will react, but she is still at lunch and hasn't had time to respond.

That's a lot of high-profile support, and boycott organizers promised at the outset that they had a lot more friends out there who could, and would, do maximum damage to the state's economy. Ten percent of the population is homosexual, we were reminded: "your brothers, your sisters, your mailman," etc., etc. The winter snows were falling on the high country slopes even as the votes were counted, but economic doom was rolling our way.

Or so we were told. But things haven't turned out that way. Not even close.

No one saw this drama coming, and Colorado's story may be instructive for the nation at large, especially those states preparing to float similar amendments (at this writing such measures are being drawn up in California, Idaho, Washington, Michigan, Florida, and Maine). There is a price to pay for such legislation, though many probably won't consider it prohibitive.

Colorado's political and media elite had been nearly uniform in opposing A2, and pre-election polls showed that most voters would vote against it as well. But once inside the polling booth, voters made sure no one was peeking through the curtain and then voted yes by 53-47 percent.

The bowels of outrage immediately broke loose. On election night gay activists took over the Democratic Party's victory celebration in downtown Denver, putting a damper on the party's first presidential win in Colorado since LBJ. The front page of the post-election morning paper carried a picture of Gov. Roy Romer at a hastily called anti–Amendment 2 rally at the state capitol: Roy held a protest sign. Pat Schroeder, who represents Denver, published a letter in the *Denver Post* promising to overcome the vote at the federal level. A suicide was blamed on the amendment's passage while activists reported an upsurge in anti-gay violence, which was duly noted in the *New York Times*'s call for a boycott. Police officials pointed out that all of the gays who had been murdered in 1992 may have been killed by other gays, but that information didn't seem to matter.

The most significant instrument of repeal, of course, was to be a national boycott of Colorado, which would cause natives to reconsider their votes and also drive home the point that such initiatives would be ruinous to any state stupid enough to follow suit. A campaign to

Dave Shiflett is deputy editorial page editor of the Rocky Mountain News *and* TAS*'s Rocky Mountain editor.*

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demonize A2 supporters was launched: a yes vote could be attributed, in most cases, to hate, though another explanation was that some who supported the amendment had been confused as to what it really meant.

But hate was the preferred explanation, and suddenly Coloradans found themselves in the same class as the dread Afrikaners, despite the fact that most people in the state are tolerant of everything short of sex with pigs (and only underage pigs at that). Anti-sodomy laws were repealed in the early 1970s and 70 percent of residents recently polled said homosexual relations between adults are not wrong. In post-election surveys, many amendment supporters stated not an aversion to homosexuality but a revulsion to the creation of another politically favored group.

Nonetheless, the anti-2 campaign was quickly taken up by the living and the Dead (the Grateful Dead, that is) and was even extended to make-believe land, as explained by David Lee, who had planned to set a spinoff from the "Cheers" television show in Denver. "We know there are many people in Colorado who are equally opposed to this canonized bigotry," he announced. "But we really can't justify spending a dime on filming exteriors, titles, or location scenes in your state."

Prominent Coloradans were accosted during visits to faraway places: Denver Mayor Wellington Webb, whose stepson is gay, was set upon during a trip to New York by an organization called the Lesbian Avengers. In the same spirit, the ad hoc New York Boycott Colorado demanded that the president of Celestial Seasonings, the Boulder-based tea company, hand over $100,000 to fight for repeal of the amendment: otherwise NYBC promised to picket stores carrying the tea until it was removed from the menu.

Extortion? Most definitely. But as of now, no charges have been filed.

The newspapers, meanwhile, have been full of A2-related stories, very few of them favorable. A search of the *Rocky Mountain News*'s electronic library for 1992-93 reflects the level of obsession. The words "deficit reduction," for instance, were found in 208 stories, while "health care reform" appeared in 237. "Amendment 2," however, was mentioned in 653 stories, while the word "homosexual" appeared in 876. Other more traditional members of the community had a difficult time keeping up: "horses," which are very popular here, were mentioned in 672 articles, while the popular "trout" were found in 423. "Heterosexuals" limped in with 145 mentions, outdoing "prairie dogs," but not by a lot.

In short, there was much, much noise: Colorado even suffered the indignity of having People for the American Way open a Boulder office this spring, so concerned is Norman Lear about the power of the "religious right" to pass such an amendment (the Rocky Mountain West has the lowest incidence of churchgoing in the United States). But if there has been noise, there have also been many, many tourists—perhaps more than ever before.

Easter afternoon at Vail's Two Elks restaurant: Though we are more than two miles above sea level and it is snowing outside, people are everywhere—planeloads of rich Mexicans, a few Europeans,

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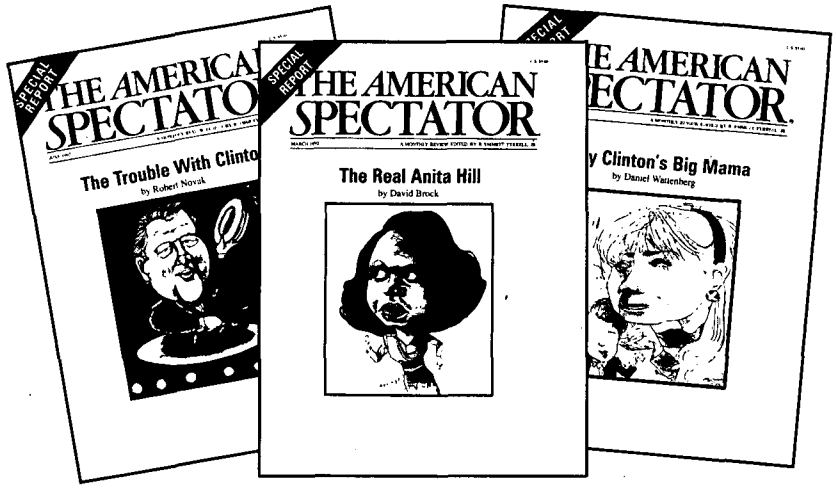

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and the usual horde of Americans. A visitor from the East looks around and asks how the protest is going; in the spirit of the day it is explained that the boycott, like the Rapture, is expected by many but has yet to arrive. Maybe it has something to do with those reports, very common since the November vote, about the homosexual population being closer to one percent than to ten.

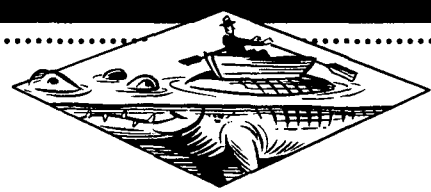
Convention cancellations through 1999 are running at about $35 million, but tourism officials believe most, if not all, will be made up in new bookings (the state's annual tourist business brings in $6 billion a year). Nonetheless, the release of the cancellation figure led to a bit of crowing by the organizers: "A purpose of the boycott is to, in fact, show that there will be no business as usual in a state that actively discriminates against gay and lesbian people," Robin Kane of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force told the AP.

Robin has a point. The ski season saw a 5-percent increase in lift-ticket sales over last year (9.87 million, up from 9.40 million)—the biggest year yet. How many of those skiers went in-state? It is hard to tell, but ski industry officials say the number of people boarding planes at area resorts rose 4.4 percent. The summer season is ahead, to be sure, but few expect a drop in the usual 9 million or so tourist visits. With the Rockies now playing in Mile High Stadium and the Pope due in August for World Youth Day, the summer season may also break records.

Despite these troubling facts, in May the boycott was deemed an "unqualified success" by national gay leaders, and a few days later a group of activists gathered in New York to chant "We're queer, we're here, we won't drink Coors beer." A dramatic scene, but perhaps not entirely justified. After all, it is very hard to gauge any ill effects from A2, as the amendment was blocked by a court injunction on January 22—before it could even go into effect.

It's not known if Barbra or Whoopi are aware of that, but they may be interested in one more piece of information. A couple of months after the vote, as the boycott raged, Coloradans were asked if they would vote the same way. They said yes by 51 to 43 percent—a larger spread than the original vote. A new plan of attack may be in order. ❐

SPECTATOR'S JOURNAL



Castroville

by Kenneth S. Lynn

In this hour of Cuba's agony, the upbeat messages that appear on state billboards in provincial town squares and along lonely highways in the countryside, as well as in choice locations across Havana, make bitterly laughable reading. "We're happy here," one of them proclaims. "I myself am staying," trumpets another. And a third insists: "To the Revolution and to Socialism we owe everything we are today." References to the Revolution in this sort of propaganda testify to an aging leadership's undiminished faith in the power of class rhetoric to arouse the people. What is more striking, though, is the number of messages that reflect the rather different strategy of the men in their thirties who run the Communist Youth League. "Cuba yes!" and "It is time to unite!" are calculated to appeal to nationalistic pride.

Kenneth S. Lynn is the author of Hemingway *and other books.*

Andres Oppenheimer and other writers who aim their reports from Cuba at American audiences speak of the coming fall of Castro. Perhaps they are right; most certainly I hope so. Yet in the course of my visit in March (during which the difficulties of life were worsened by hurricane-force winds roaring out of the same storm system that buried the eastern U.S. in snow), none of the sharp-eyed Cuba-watchers in the U. S. Interests Section was willing to say to me flat-out that the fate of Castro was sealed. Nor did I see, or hear tell of, any sort of public manifestation of discontent with his rule, even though it is surely widespread.

What is far clearer than the imminence of the Maximum Leader's departure is the fact that the system he imposed upon the populace with his arrival never worked. Thanks to the subsidy of $2 billion a year (in some years, the amount may have soared to $4 billion) that the Soviets were slip-

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ping him, Castro was able to get away with the fraudulent claim that it was socialism that had made decent health care and free education available to everyone and, among other evaporative miracles, had caused prostitution and beggary to vanish. But now that the subsidy has vanished, his paradise has collapsed like the one-hoss shay. Beggars are back on the streets. Prostitutes lounge in the lobby of the Hotel Inglaterra, while their semi-pro younger sisters (some of whom look no more than fourteen) patrol the seafront esplanade. Medical doctors are in short supply, as are drugs and other medicines, including over-the-counter items like aspirin. As for the educational system, it is gravely underfunded now at every level, and import restrictions have completely blocked off the access of university teachers and students to significant new books—as I had occasion to discover when I addressed a seminar at the University of Havana.

Everywhere you turn in Cuba today, you are made aware of deprivation. Thousands of phones are broken, and phone directories, like most paper products (e.g., toilet paper) are non-existent. The crowds of men and women at bus stops, in city neighborhoods and country places alike, have that dying-on-the-vine look on their faces of people who have been waiting for an inordinately long time—for two or three hours in many cases; for when the battered hulk of a decades-old Hungarian polluter heaves into view at long last, it is apt to be so crowded that only a few more passengers can squeeze on board. In a barn-like supermarket that I visited with my wife and two daughters, a half-peck of potatoes, a comparable amount of tomatoes, a few paper bags of rice, and half a dozen bars of unwrapped yellow soap represented the entire inventory. Power outages occur day and night. Worst of all is the relationship between salaries and living costs. A common laborer earns 200 pesos a month; a medical doctor or an eminent professor of science, 450 at the most. The price of a pair of shoes on the black market, however, is 500 pesos, while a decent pair of slacks can't be bought for under twice that amount.

Castro is counting heavily on tourism to redeem his dream and confound his enemies. Thanks to joint ventures that state companies have worked out with foreign investors, the industry is now doing a $400 million-a-year business, according to *Granma* (the official Communist newspaper, which purchasers are wont to stack in piles beside their toilets for sanitary uses). At Varadero, to the east of Havana, the combination of an international airstrip, a string of modern hotels headed by the Hyatt-like Meliá Varadero, and room prices lower than comparable accommodations command on the Amalfi Coast, say, or the Costa Brava, is indeed attracting streams of package-tour sunworshippers from Canada, Italy, Spain, and South America. Visitors from the U.S. are rare birds of course. Yet the only currency that the Meliá and its counterparts accept at the desk or in their restaurants is the greenback, and the same situation obtains at the Plaza, the Inglaterra, and the newly renovated Nacional in Havana.

Most taxi drivers in Havana also deal in dollars exclusively, as do all the restaurants in town that are worth eating in, from the Tocororo on down. So that the state may capture the dollars that are surreptitiously passed to waiters as tips, a new law will soon enable them to exchange their tips for scrip that can be redeemed in goods in the privileged stores previously reserved for the shopping of high-placed apparatchiks.

But will tourist dollars ever be able to make up the withdrawal of the Soviet subsidy? The prospects are dim, for all sorts of reasons, only one of which will be stated here. The condition of Havana militates against its recovery of its magnetic reputation as a place where the good times roll. In the 1950s, Castro viewed the capital as the symbol of bourgeois corruption and decadence, and for thirty years he discriminated against it. Now, of course, he doesn't have the money, even if he had the desire, to repair its crumbling façades, or to replace the buildings that have actually fallen down. The daiquiris at the Floridita, moreover, are shamelessly watered, and the revue at the Tropicana is so hilariously out of date as to make you wonder whether Carmen Miranda is really dead. ❐

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The Book on *Dave*

by Victor Gold

Don't talk to me about the movie *Dave*. I've liked Kevin Kline as an actor since *The Big Chill*, and think enough of his co-star Sigourney Weaver to have sat through an entire performance of a theatrical mishmash called *Hurly Burly*. I've even enjoyed the work of *Dave*'s director Ivan Reitman when he's handled material like *Ghostbusters* and *Big*, aimed at pubescent and would-be pubescent audiences.

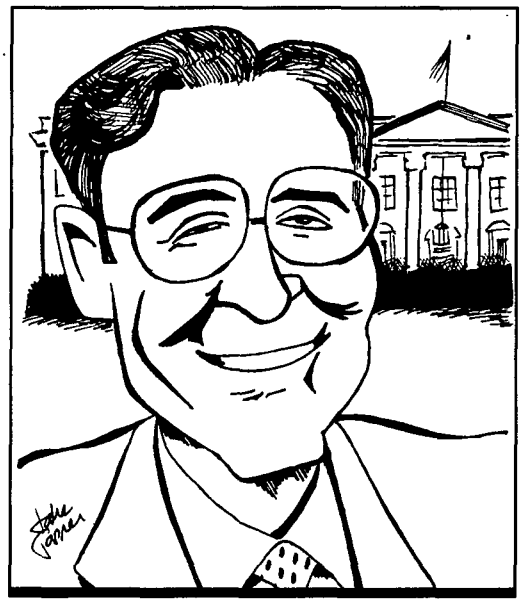
But *Dave* is another matter. It is, in case you haven't seen it or read the reviews, a movie about a thoroughly dislikable president who has a stroke while bleeping a woman other than his wife. A conniving chief of staff and White House communications director then conspire to keep their boss's condition a state secret. They do this by bringing in a double, the spitting image of the stricken president; but predictably, Dave the double, in heartwarming Hollywood fashion, is thoroughly likable, a salt-of-the-earth *mensch*. In short, given that the writer of the screenplay is a former wordsmith for Michael Dukakis, the character Dave is a liberal's idealized perception of a liberal, albeit of populist rather than Harvard persuasion. Think of Frank Capra—Mr. Smith, John Doe—and you have the essence of *Dave*, touted by Reitman and friendly critics as a post-Reagan affirmation of the ultimate triumph of compassionate leadership over gluttonous special interests. Think also of Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* and Mark Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper*, fables involving a role switch between the powerful and the pure-of-heart.

Or think, as I necessarily do, of *The Body Politic*—assuming you've heard of it—a Washington novel by Vic Gold and Lynne Cheney bought by Orion Pictures and scheduled for production in the political season of 1992.

Let me tell you about *The Body Politic*. It is the story of a thoroughly dislikable *vice* president who has a heart attack while bleeping a woman other than his wife. A conniving White House chief of staff and the vice president's press secretary then conspire, for ulterior political motives (as if there were any other) to keep the death a state secret. They do this by . . .

Of course Los Angeles is a marvelous environment for telepathy, so who am I to question the plot similarity between *Dave*, which surfaced as an, ahem, *original* screenplay in 1992, and *The Body Politic*, which was making the rounds of Hollywood's studios and agents as early as 1988? Or to wonder at the remarkable coincidence of real-life characters like the McLaughlin Group and Bob Novak appearing in *Dave* when the same personalities, playing their same obstreperous selves, had been written into the Gold-Cheney plot five years earlier?

Who indeed?



Still, I wonder. And it rankles that a major studio like Orion, instead of making *The Body Politic*, should, within weeks after buying it, do a Chapter Eleven, leaving Lynne Cheney, me—and among *auteurs*, the estimable social commentator Woody Allen—without a studio in which to flaunt our comic genius (though Allen, as we know, has gone on to bigger laughs).

But authorial paranoia aside, I doubt I'd like *Dave* in any event, perpetuating as it does the Capra-esque myth that there is nothing wrong with Washington (and government) that One Well-Intentioned Man can't set right.

For my own part, I was relieved of that puerile notion about the time John F. Kennedy, three months after riding into the Oval Office on a white charger, turned to the cameras and said, "This job's a lot more complicated than I thought it would be." But there are others, obviously, with less memory and more sanguinity, who go to the polls every four years in slack-jawed search of Mr. Smith, or Dave, or Bill.

Were I truly paranoid, instead of merely rankled, I'd conclude this is exactly what the liberal Hollywood myth-makers hope for when they make movies like *Dave*. But of course, as Ben Stein regularly tells us—and as my experience in the un-making of *The Body Politic* confirmed—this is to view Hollywood West as an ideological hotbed, which in fact it isn't.

True, there is evergreen Barbra Streisand to say otherwise, along with Robert Redford and that durable den-mother of Hollywood liberalism, Lauren Bacall. And who can forget the

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Victor Gold is The American Spectator*'s national correspondent.*

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descent of the glitz-and-famous on Washington in January, when the new president and his leading lady, on their first night in the White House, turned the Lincoln Bed over to the producers of "Evening Shade" and "Designing Women"?

But think back, if you will, to another night, eight months earlier, when Billy Crystal, emceeing the 1992 Academy Awards show, brought the house down with a shake of his head and the words, "*Didn't inhale?*"

No, Hollywood West isn't so much a hotbed of serious opinion as a place with an attitude, a fickle constituency as likely to turn on its friend Bill as Capra's mob turned on Gary Cooper. This isn't to say that the place isn't liberal; only that, four decades after its holy war against the House Committee on Un-American Activities, the Hollywood Left is now reduced to showing its colors in terms of red ribbons and ski-resort boycotts.

All of which brings me back to *Dave* and Hollywood West's perception of how people-and-power operate in the nation's capital.

In Capra's day—indeed, up to the time of Otto Preminger, who came to town to film *Advise and Consent*—Washington was awed by the arrival of directors, stars, and crews to film scenes for a motion picture, major or minor. No longer; in any given week, the Style/Life sections of the Washington *Post* and *Times* bring word of Clint Eastwood holding up traffic (*In the Line of Fire*) or Denzel Washington's breakfast order at the Four Seasons (*The Pelican Brief*).

Hollywood East: Coming soon to your neighborhood theater, an excess of movies about Washington; some light, some heavy, but all given over to the Capra myth in one form or other. Nor do I, next time around, intend to get rolled when I add my contribution to the pile. I've learned the system, sufficiently so to . . .

Well, let me tell you about this truly original script I'm working on. It's about a young, ingenuous senator—call him Jones or Smith—who *goes to Washington* to do battle with the fat cats and lobbyists. Kind of a Jimmy Stewart type, but I see someone like Kevin Kline playing it, with, say, Sigourney Weaver in the role of a feisty newspaper reporter who . . . ❐

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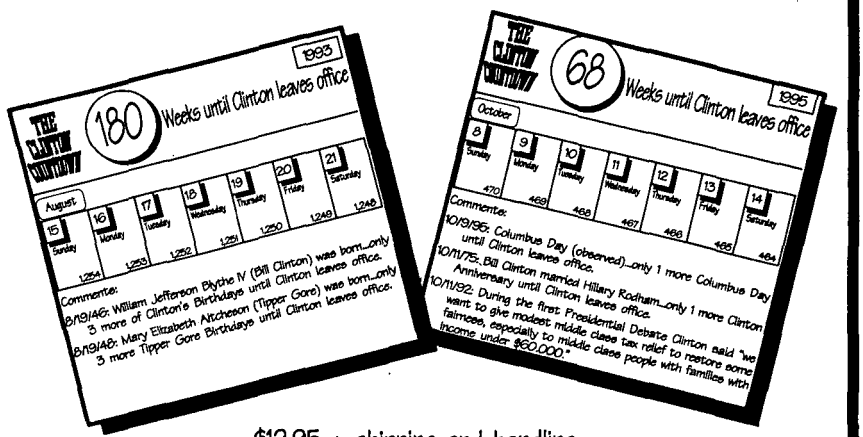
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68
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1995
October
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All Shook Up

by James Bowman

This month's movies are about mix-ups in love. In *Dave*, a wife (a fictional first lady) realizes a persistent wifely fantasy and finds in her husband a new man—because he really *is* a new man. In *The Night We Never Met*, a married woman falls in love with a man she has never seen and so gets the wrong man when she goes astray. *Sliver* teaches the scary lesson that even voyeurism can be unsafe sex, and *Wide Sargasso Sea* reveals why Charlotte Brontë's Mr. Rochester must have been attracted to a little prig like Jane Eyre. In *Three of Hearts*, a lesbian hires a gigolo to break the heart of her bisexual lover so that she will come back to her, but reckons without the consequence that any movie-goer could have told her was likely to ensue—the pretense of love becomes the real thing. Something similar happens, more than once, in *Much Ado About Nothing*, an old favorite redone by the dashing Kenneth Branagh. This film also reveals that Shakespeare knew, some 360 years before the song was written, the answer to the question: Why do fools fall in love?

• • •

Mix-ups in love are sometimes those of fictional characters, but these days they are more often, I think, those of their creators. For example, the politics in *Dave* (dealt with on the previous page by Victor Gold), are predictably infantile, but so is its more sympathetic love story. It is a fantasy, long beloved in Hollywood both on and off the screen, that just being really really nice is all a leader has to do to solve his and his country's political problems when in fact, as Jimmy Carter discovered, mere niceness is a positive disqualification for leadership. It is equally a fantasy and equally typical of the entertainment industry that love is about finding The One Right Person.

This is a Harlequin paperback view of romance, but it has always been a standard one in Tinseltown. The idea that somewhere "out there" is to be found some ideal mate is likely to be destructive of real relationships and lead to promiscuity and infidelity on the one hand and futile attempts to remold our partners to our own specifications on the other. If you are going to get mixed up in love these days, that is how it is most likely going to happen: by clinging to a chimerical ideal—an ideal that the movies would convince you it's only a mix-up if you haven't got.

In *Dave*, Sigourney Weaver is not required by the plot to betray her marital vows, but only because the movie's creators thoughtfully provided a massive and ultimately fatal stroke to get rid of her husband, the president (Kevin Kline), whom they portray as corrupt, brutal, and power-hungry. Having got rid of the bad Kevin Kline, they can then match her up with her dream man—a gentle, funny, and childlike Kevin Kline. This kind of husband-replacement fantasy is encouraged by the assumption that men are of two types: coarse, rough, and brutally insensitive to women or soft, gentle, and sensitive. Under this increasingly common assumption, romance consists in getting the girl away from a Neanderthal type one and into the arms of some type-two girlie man who understands about "relationships."

The dream factory has another version of the same fantasy on display in *The Night We Never Met*. Kevin Anderson and Michael Mantell are type ones and Matthew Broderick is the type two. The maiden in distress is Annabella Sciorra, a dentist's assistant who, like Sigourney Weaver in *Dave*, is linked for life to a lout (Mantell)—the kind of guy who takes a portable TV so he can watch the ballgame when she drags him off to a foreign film. He also shows his callous insensitivity by buying them a house in the suburbs without telling her. For these reasons we are meant to think that she is entitled to an affair, but, by mistake, she sleeps with a jerk (Anderson) who is even worse than her hubby. You can tell because he drinks beer, smokes cigars, watches football on TV, leaves a mess for others to clear up, and doesn't like the ballet.

Poor Miss Sciorra suffers. First there is her husband's neglect, then her lover's piggish insensitivity, and finally her husband's boorish inability to understand why she had to have the affair. After many vicissitudes she comes in the end to meet and hook up with her ideal, the man she thought she was trading for all along, *viz.* the soulful Broderick, a delicatessen attendant with the heart of a yuppie. She has fallen in love with him sight unseen on account of his caring and sensitive notes left for her in an apartment that both are subletting on different days of the week—notes about art, literature, houseplants, and sophisticated cookery. It is obvious that they will be very happy.

Sometimes, it is true, people really do find themselves in relationships with desperately unsuitable or even deadly partners, and this is another of Hollywood's favorite tropes, used or played off of in, among others, *Gaslight, Suspicion*, or *Dial M for Murder*. *Sliver*, the new thriller with Sharon Stone, William Baldwin, and Tom Berenger, is a variant on the formula in that we are invited to speculate as to which of Miss

James Bowman is the Times Literary Supplement*'s American editor and* TAS*'s regular movie critic.*

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Stone's two equally unpleasant suitors is actually a murderous psychopath—as if she needed this as an excuse to avoid either one. The trick is that the one who is not the killer turns out to be even more weird than the one who is. He gets a thrill from high-tech voyeurism for the paradoxical reason that what he picks up on his TV screens is "Real Life"—unlike his own, as Miss Stone says in her witty riposte to end the film: "Get a life."

And that is the moral of the story, children, that spying on other people may be too real or not real enough but it is not nice, even if we might all be tempted, like Sharon Stone, by the power that video cameras and computer enhancement are giving us to look. That and a mildly twisted plot are about all there is to it, since the hot sex has had to be cooled for the R-rating. Likewise, *Wide Sargasso Sea* teaches that when sex is associated with the tropical sun, lush vegetation, drugs, and dusky maidens dancing to the beat of bongo drums, it is too powerful: it can kill you, or drive you mad, or put you, like Mr. Rochester, to terror-stricken flight back to the more temperate climate and the more prudish women of the northern latitudes.

Somehow we knew that too, although it is not a piece of information ever likely to be of use to more than a very few of us. So, too, *Three of Hearts* teaches that it is dangerous to cross a pimp and that a man (William Baldwin again!) who comes between two lesbians is likely to have trouble on both sides—as well as with his pimp. These are useful things to know if you move in certain social circles, but the film's main purpose is to teach another of Hollywood's favorite life lessons and the one that made it take *The Crying Game* to its corrupt little heart: that love is essentially unisex. That image is reinforced when Baldwin and his lesbian employer, Kelly Lynch, both of whom have found their long-sought ideal in Sherilyn Fenn and been dumped by her, walk off into the sunset arm in arm like best friends. Just two guys together.

Here, clearly, is a mix-up that insists that it is not mixed up at all. We're not supposed to laugh at the absurdity in this situation. I don't know what I think of the homosexual project to persuade us that single-sex love is just the same as the heterosexual kind, adjusted for mere anatomical variations. Perhaps it is. But I would be much more willing to believe that if it took itself less seriously—if the mix-ups and the absurdities and the indignities of love were more often seen, as they are in Shakespearean comedy, as a part of love's very nature. To see what I mean, have a look at *Much Ado About Nothing*, Branagh's filmed version of which is Movie of the Month—in a bad month.

For there is much that is wrong with it. Of course the poetry is sacrificed to naturalistic acting, but that is pretty standard and one reason why Shakespeare rarely works on film. Even making allowances for that necessary *faux pas*, however, the picture is too loud, too boisterous, and too hearty in its jollity, so that much of the play's nuance is lost.

Neither the music nor the dancing seems to work here, being too overpowered with strings and rompery, respectively, to bear undamaged the delicate emotional skein of Shakespeare's plangent heynonneys. The country-house setting makes it looks as if Branagh couldn't stop remaking his precious and self-indulgent *Peter's Friends*, released here last winter. Add to all this the fact that he makes a complete mess of the Dogberry-Verges scenes, in which Michael Keaton is an appallingly bad Dogberry, and you begin to wonder if the picture can even be worth seeing.

Partly the answer is that there is a lot to ruin in a Shakespeare play: it takes a really monumental level of incompetence to spoil one completely. And there are some good things about Branagh's movie—not least the performances of himself and his real-life wife, Emma Thompson, as Benedick and Beatrice. I also like the fact that it all but ignores the problem of Claudio (Robert Sean Leonard), the mercenary popinjay who deliberately and unjustly shames his bride, Hero (Kate Beckinsale), in public on their wedding day. There is every reason to think him a thoroughly discredited character in any plausible modern reading of the play and at the same time to believe that Shakespeare didn't care about that, or want it to appear in performance. For the play to come off on stage, he needed Claudio himself to remain, as well as to marry, a Hero—something that Branagh instinctively recognizes.

Branagh also—and this is his chief recommendation—recognizes that love is both serious and absurd, and he does right by the play's premiere image of that conjunction in Claudio's mourning for the supposedly dead Hero in preparation for marriage with her supposedly identical cousin (is this where "The Patty Duke Show" got its idea?). Likewise, Benedick will risk his own life to kill his best friend solely to please his lady, yet he continually takes his own seriousness too seriously, imagining for instance that somehow his decision to fall in love with Beatrice can be accounted for by the fact that "The world must be peopled." Audiences pick up the comedy in that line because its over-rationalization is so typical of head-in-the-clouds intellectuals, but it also leads them on to share Hero's wonderment at how, in general, "loving goes by haps" and thus at the apparent contradiction between love's arbitrariness and its power.

Above all, Benedick, just like real people, has to unlearn the false and merely sentimental romanticism of the search for the ideal: his promise not to love "till all graces be in one woman" is immediately demolished by the information that the woman with whom he has just been finding so much fault is in love with him. Thus the real drives out the fanciful (even when the real is at that point fanciful too!) in at least one movie at your local multiplex. Thanks to Will Shakespeare. And thanks to Kenneth Branagh for noticing. ❐

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THE REAL ANITA HILL: THE UNTOLD STORY

David Brock

Free Press / 438 pages / $24.95

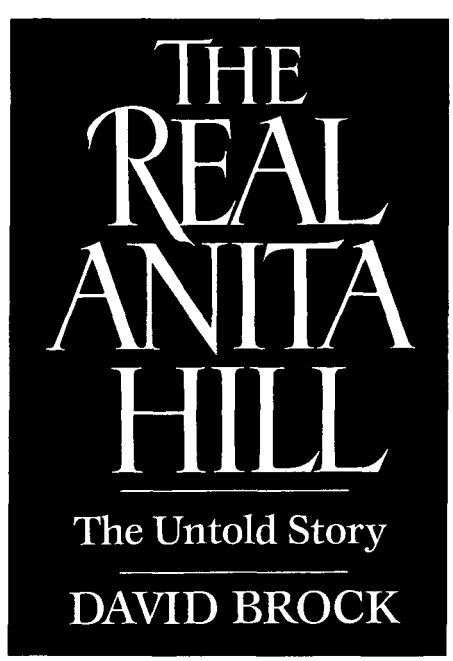
reviewed by R. EMMETT TYRRELL, JR.

This is one of those rare books that is best begun—as is the Bible—last chapter first. Both books hold another similarity, to wit, both are books of revelation; but whereas the Bible is also a book of piety, *The Real Anita Hill* is a book of the utmost impiety. Even now there are bookstores that have banned it.

The Real Anita Hill questions the veracity, the character, the whole public persona of she who would be our own Joan of Arc if various women of fevered brow had had their way. On October 11, 1991, Anita Hill was nobody. Twenty-four hours later she was a media giant. One week after that she was The Hope of all American women down there in the dungeon, rattling their chains so piteously while we guys up here laugh it up. Since then this woman of destiny has taken on mythic qualities.

St. Anita raised—so legend has it—"sexual harassment" to its rightful eminence atop the left's catalogue of American outrages. Sexual harassment has indeed, as David Brock duly notes, become an outrage, but it is indicative not of American history but of recent liberal history. I have an axiom: most of the outrages that American leftists are most ardent to reform are, in truth, the unanticipated consequences of prior left-wing reforms. Consider the homeless: most are the result of such left-wing reforms as rent control and deinstitutionalization. Or urban poverty—begotten by decades of good-government reforms that have made the plight of the poor more wretched and intractable than ever in this century. Or the benighted condition of American education—begotten by endless experimentation in our schools. Such reflections lead to a second axiom of mine: any institution that comes under the dominance of liberal reformers eventually loses all sight of its original purposes, along with its capacity to accomplish them.

Like so many other contemporary outrages, sexual harassment is the unanticipated consequence of a congeries of reforms that the left was once fain to boast of as The Sexual Revolution. In the 1960s, the left led the way in breaking down barriers against sexual restraint, indecent language, and lascivious manners. When those of a prudish cast of mind objected, the left raucously derided them. When some feminists, however, noted that sexual utopia made them at times uncomfortable, the left was moved to action—not against the sexual revolution, which could stay in place, but against any American man who in any way had crossed an indignant woman. Clarence Thomas, Brock argues, did so, and in his speculations as to why St. Anita had become indignant, Brock demonstrates a far-ranging understanding of human psychology, far keener than that demonstrated by any of the mediocrities in the United States Senate.



Now let me explain why *The Real Anita Hill* is best read from back to front. In its final three pages, Brock itemizes those of his conclusions that reveal the fundamental point about *l'affaire* Hill-Thomas, namely: St. Anita lied; Clarence Thomas told the truth. A fumbling Senate panel and an incompetent press beclouded this point, leaving millions to believe that no one can ever know who lied. Well, Brock has rescued us from the clouds of unknowing.

Brock's conclusions about Thomas amount to this:

(1) Prior to Hill's charges Thomas had been found morally fit by four Senate confirmation hearings and five FBI investigations.

(2) Nothing Thomas said was "at variance with the established facts of the case."

(3) Thomas's opponents could not find anyone to challenge even his so-called "evasion" that since the *Roe* v. *Wade* decision he had not discussed its essentials.

(4) His testimony about his office behavior was supported by "practically every woman who had ever worked for him."

(5) All who knew both Hill and Thomas believed Thomas.

(6) At the time Thomas was alleged to have been pursuing Hill he was seriously involved with another woman and at the point of engagement with her.

(7) The Justice Department had suggested Hill as a character witness, and the innocent Thomas "encouraged the idea."

(8) Once Hill had made her charges behind closed doors Thomas could have withdrawn with his reputation intact and his place on the D.C. Circuit Court secure, but Thomas went through with renewed hearings, apparently either "power-mad" or confident of his innocence.

Brock's conclusions regarding St. Anita are grimmer:

(1) St. Anita did not voluntarily come forward, as her dubious supporters sing;

R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr. is editor-in-chief of The American Spectator.

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she was "outed" by opponents of Thomas's nomination.

(2) Her case, "uncorroborated and unsupported by any co-worker, or anyone else," was not a typical harassment case; it was far flimsier.

(3) During the period that Anita Hill claims she was being harassed by Thomas, there is no record of such grievances emitting from her—only statements that Thomas was the "ideal boss," who "did not even notice me."

(4) More than a dozen people refuted parts of her testimony—either they lied or she did.

(5) St. Anita gave "differing and inconsistent" explanations of her contacts with Thomas after leaving his employment.

(6) She said she had agreed to be identified as Thomas's accuser when she made her initial complaint to the Judiciary Committee, though in fact she had not so agreed. This the record makes clear.

(7) Of her statements regarding the FBI's interview with her, some are thoroughly contradicted by the agents who conducted the interview.

(8) She was deceitful and mendacious about her work record as a lawyer for the firm of Wald, Harkrader & Ross, about her work in government at the Department of Education and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, about her hiring and behavior at Oral Roberts University Law School, and about her record at the University of Oklahoma Law School.

(9) The record is clear that she was dishonest about her feelings toward Thomas as a boss and as a political thinker.

In fine and in sum: St. Anita lies, and in this imperfect world of imperfect human beings Clarence Thomas is thus far a moral exemplar. Tread carefully, Clarence!

L'affaire Hill-Thomas revolves around a very simple question: Who lied? Yet here again the American left has demonstrated its amazing knack for transforming a simple matter into a fecund breeding ground of vexed issues, bizarre legends, monumental moral causes, and ideological jihads. According to such sages as Anna Quindlen, Jane Mayer, and Jill Abramson, *The Real Anita Hill*, which originated in David Brock's March 1992 essay in this magazine, is a product of conservative ideology. Well, I have checked the conservative ideological agenda, and nowhere is it mentioned that we conservatives approve of lying under oath. I am certain conservatives are against it, but does this mean the American left favors it and exalts Anita Hill for her courageous dishonesty? The left has taken some very strange positions in the past, and remember the honor it accorded Alger Hiss. For that matter, think of the present president. He is a congenital liar, and we know where he got his political support.

After pondering Brock's conclusions, readers will want to read earlier chapters, where, with the utmost intelligence and insight, Brock adduces his evidence. He does this through a meticulous reading of testimonies, through interviews, judicious reportage, and a high regard for justice. *The Real Anita Hill* is a work of scholarship, superb journalism, and profound respect for those values that liberals of a better vintage struggled for several centuries to engraft on the American polity. Now the American left would trample all these values: due process, the rules of evidence, of objectivity, of fair play, the principle of innocence until proven guilty, the rules of the United States Senate, and the institution of a judiciary independent from politics.

In a masterly narrative, Brock demonstrates that Clarence Thomas is a resourceful, intelligent man who for the most part plotted his own defense. Brock shows that there are in and around Capitol Hill left-wing partisans who will undertake every low scheme, no matter how dishonorable, to achieve their idiotic political purpose. They denounce their opponents in terms of indignant righteousness that are as preposterous as those of now-defunct Nazis and Communists. As Brock proves, they took a mediocre affirmative-action casualty seething with left-wing feminist rage and foisted her on the world as a moral and intellectual colossus. The innocents in the press missed the entire story. They missed St. Anita's left-wing politics, her record of incompetence, even her membership in a pornographic reading circle at the University of Oklahoma, which must be one of the most useless universities in the land. Others in the press, such as Nina Totenberg, fell in with the partisans.

The Real Anita Hill is one of the most carefully researched and lucidly written pieces of investigative journalism written in this century, and Brock put it all together in eleven months. No one will successfully refute its major revelations. In a particularly important chapter, demonstrating the seriousness of sexual harassment and debunking the myth that Anita Hill's charges constitute a typical harassment case, Brock quotes the indignant Thomas's moving statement to Senator Hatch. "I don't think this is right," Thomas declares, "I think it's wrong. I think it's wrong for the country. I think it's hurt me and I think it's hurt the country. I have never been accused of sex harassment. And anyone who knows me knows I am adamantly opposed to that, adamant, and yet, I sit here accused. I will never be able to get my name back. I know it."

Well, on that point and on that point alone you have been proved wrong, Justice Thomas. You have your name back, thanks to your courage and integrity and to David Brock's industry and intelligence. And thank you for reminding us that your enemies hurt the country. Once again they made the Republic look infantile to the world. ❐

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DECLINING FORTUNES: THE WITHERING OF THE AMERICAN DREAM

Katherine S. Newman

Basic Books / 257 pages / $23

reviewed by STEVEN LAGERFELD

Political prophets once saw the poor, the oppressed, and the downtrodden as the engines of history. Today, all hopes in the political-upheaval trade seem to lie with the middle class, which itself is increasingly seen as poor, oppressed, and downtrodden. Kevin Phillips, who rode to fame a quarter of a century ago on the thesis that the political future would be remade by middle-class anger over the Democrats' cultural liberalism, now rides high on the theme that middle-class economic resentments will feed a populist backlash against the plutocrats. Republicans, meanwhile, have a great deal staked on the not-unreasonable proposition that middle-class dismay over gay rights, abortion, and family-bashing is the key to electoral primacy. Now, riding in on Phillips's left (if I have charted his latest position correctly) comes Katherine S. Newman with the striking notion that the plight of the middle class may inspire an uprising of the oppressed baby-boom generation, especially its sixties wing.

Newman, an anthropologist at Columbia University, bases this unusual fusion of class and generational politics on her study of some 160 people in "Pleasanton," a real commuter town in the northern New Jersey suburbs of New York whose name has been changed, perhaps to protect the innocent. It is an archetypal postwar suburb, filled in over the years by a mix of blue- and white-collar workers who rode the wave of postwar prosperity out of New York, raised their children in suburbia's leafy green precincts, and are now retiring. The problem is that their children, or at least the ones Newman chose to interview, can't afford the houses or the way of life their parents are leaving behind. This is a book, in other words, that looks up close and personal at the lament of the 1990s: that this is the first generation in American history that will not live as well as its parents did.

The portraits are affecting at times, and to borrow a phrase from the Clinton era it is possible to "share the pain" of Newman's subjects. But it is not, after all, very great pain. These are not people who have been laid off after thirty years on the job, or who had to grow up in a ghetto, or who possess only a high-school degree. (It is the latter group more than any other that has seen its chances at a middle-class existence slip.) Their problem is not that they are excluded from the middle class but that they are excluded from what has become, thanks to its proximity to New York, an upper-middle-class enclave in the years since their childhood. Location, location, location, as the real estate agents say.

The problem confronting Pleasanton's baby boomers is not exactly downward mobility, which generally means working in a lesser occupation than one's parents; it is that people like them used to be able to step on the postwar economic escalator and more or less sit back and enjoy the ride to affluence. Since about 1973, however, average incomes have been rising too slowly to accomplish that. Now you have to get off and climb.

Even so, there remains a pretty reliable formula for achieving affluence: go to college with an eye on the job market, get a job, preferably in a growing industry in the private sector, start a business if possible, work very hard, and avoid living in the overpriced cities of California and the Northeast, where your money won't go very far. If you must have a brand-spanking-new house before you are 30, move to Atlanta or North Carolina. Otherwise, trade up more slowly.

Newman's subjects violate one or all of these rules. Her very first one is Lauren, who "doggedly followed the prescription for entry into the middle class and landed the kind of job that should have made it all possible, as a midlevel administrator of a federal lending program." Indeed, as many of Newman's sixties-vintage subjects acknowledge, their difficulties often stem from their own choices, and their plight seems more an indictment of the ideas that flourished amid the easy affluence of their younger years than of today's economy. Once they scorned Pleasanton and all it stood for. They sought a "more soul-satisfying life," Newman explains, and "were never destined to equal their parents standard of living."

All of the statistical evidence from social science, as well as the anecdotal evidence from Newman's book, shows that the more traditional route of climbing the occupational ladder to the American Dream is still wide open. It is

Steven Lagerfeld is deputy editor of the Wilson Quarterly.

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not as if the houses of Pleasanton are standing empty. According to Newman, among the people moving in are ambitious yuppie professionals and Asian-Americans—people who were more ambitious, hard-working, or sometimes just plain luckier than those they displaced. If Pleasanton were an upper-class redoubt like Greenwich, Connecticut, it would be easier to recognize the merit in this social churning, painful as it is. We would not want to have a hereditary upper middle class any more than we would want to have a landed aristocracy. Yet it is essential to Newman's case to make Pleasanton's young seem like victims: "The 1990s are returning us to an earlier era in which birthright determined one's fortunes. Those who can afford the better things in life will have them from the beginning, and those who do not will find it much harder to lay their hands on a middle-class identity."

What seems to bother Newman most, however, is that Pleasanton's older baby boomers have recognized some of their mistakes. Mingled with the nostalgia, resentment, and peevishness that emerges in their words is a rueful sense of mistakes made and opportunities lost. Of course, part of this has nothing to do with the national economic climate and everything to do with growing older and having children. "What will my salary be—what if I can't be what I want to be?" asks one woman. "Who thought of that in the seventies?" Newman—who has tenure, after all—has other regrets. In the past, she writes, with the sixties obviously in mind, "there have been times . . . where experimentation, the restless quest for a better life, was esteemed. This is not one of those times."

One of the genuine problems of the post-1973 era of slower growth, one that weighs heavily on Pleasanton's baby boomers, is that it has pushed mothers of young children to enter the work force to help the family maintain what they consider a middle-class lifestyle. Women may be working, Newman says, but the mothers and potential mothers in her study all desperately want to stay home, and they feel terribly guilty if they don't. What could possibly be responsible for this return of retrograde sentiments? Love of family? Doubts about the overwhelming importance of career? Once again, Newman chooses a perverse interpretation of events. The villain is the new economic stringency, she says, which stirs parents' anxieties about their children's future and encourages them to abandon nobler pursuits in order to devote full time to grooming children to compete in the marketplace. "How can we ensure that our children retain their hold on a middle-class life when the nation has lost control over its industrial destiny?" she asks, purporting to speak for her subjects.

That is something she cannot really do. Although a few of Pleasanton's children share her nostalgia for the sixties, her hopes for a left-wing revolt among baby boomers seem far-fetched, especially when one considers that vast segments of the generation have had experiences very different from those of their Pleasanton peers. This generation is unlikely to take us back to the sixties, but it is not going to take us back to the tranquil fifties either. The voices that emerge from this book are full of regret and resentment and frustration. It is a volatile blend, and if we ever get the economic escalator going again it will be important to remember what misguided ideas produced it. ❐

FLAUBERT

Henri Troyat

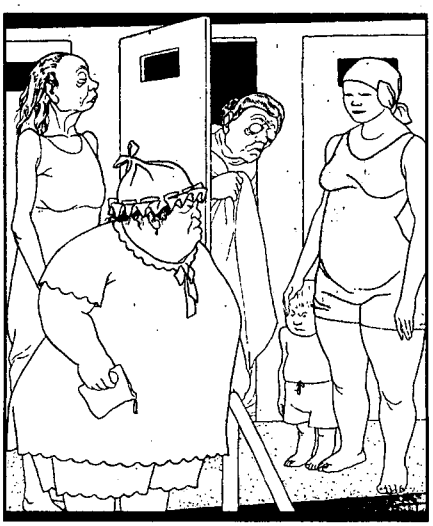
Viking / 374 pages / $25

reviewed by ALGIS VALIUNAS

This estimable biography recounts one of the strangest and saddest lives that any artist has lived. At the age of twelve, the precocious Flaubert is already playing the misanthrope in a letter to an older friend: "If I didn't have a fifteenth-century queen of France in my head and at the tip of my pen, I should be totally disgusted with life and a bullet would long since have delivered me from this crude joke called life." Only the novel he is writing delivers him from the world's crushing stupidity. The pattern is cut here for a life's work. Living is impossible without the consolations of art. The only happiness the world offers is to be had in the writer's study.

In his adolescence Flaubert did seek happiness elsewhere, in love. At 15 he became heartsick over a woman of 26 whom he met on summer vacation at the beach. Watching her nurse the child she had had by her middle-aged lover was as close as Flaubert came to sexual fulfillment, and as much as he could stand. In *Memoirs of a Madman*, written months later, Flaubert rhapsodized this unconsummated passion: "Dear angel of my youth, you whom I saw in the freshness of my emotions, you whom I loved with a love so sweet, so full of perfume, of tender daydreams, adieu!" Three years later he finally got hold of a woman, a hotel-keeper in Marseilles and 35 years old. With Eulalie Foucaud he had a four-day erotic idyll and a correspondence, passionate at first, then increasingly

Algis Valiunas is a writer living in Boynton Beach, Florida.



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polite. To a friend he wrote at the time: "You say you don't have a woman. Upon my word, I think that's very sensible, seeing that I regard the species as rather stupid. Woman is a commonplace animal that man has over-idealized. The liking for statuary inclines us to masturbation; the reality we find disgusting." In another youthful novel, *November*, he was to write of his affair, "Why have we such aspirations and such disappointments? Why is the heart of man so large and life so small? There are days when the love of the very angels could not satisfy him, and he wearies in an hour of all the caresses on earth." Aching for the momentous and rare, he could not but be disappointed by the banality of sexual love.

Of course, he saw to it that sexuality was banal, not to say frightful. He frequented prostitutes, and came down with syphilis. He would select the ugliest woman in the brothel, and have sexual intercourse in front of his friends while smoking a cigar. When he fell for the married and promiscuous poetess Louise Colet—he was 25, she 36—almost immediately he began back-pedaling to escape her ruthless pursuit. She wanted to bear his child, and he could not bear the thought of fatherhood:

> That I, who have sworn never to join anyone's existence to my own, *I* should give birth to another life! . . . The very idea makes a chill run down my spine. And if, in order to prevent that life from coming into the world, it were necessary for me to leave it, the Seine is here, and I would throw myself into it at this very moment with a 36-pound cannonball attached to my feet.

At bottom, he knew himself unfit for the ordinary pleasures of life, and offered her an explanation for his refractoriness:

> I have passed the age when one loves as you would like me to. I don't know why I yielded that time; you attracted me—me, who so distrust attractive things. . . . I shrink from everything that belongs to life; I have a horror of everything that lures me back and plunges me into it again. . . . I have within me, deep inside, a fundamental, intimate, bitter, and never-ending *boredom* that prevents me from enjoying anything and that fills my soul to bursting.

Here is the essential complaint of a lifetime. It was the mark of his superiority to all he encountered, and made him capable of extreme cruelty. When he broke off with Louise Colet, the rupture was an act of reptilian coldness:

> Madame:
> I am told that you took the trouble to call on me three times last evening. I was not in. And, fearing that if you persist in this way I shall be obliged to offer you repeated affronts, I am bound by the rules of courtesy to warn you that *I shall never be in.*
>
> Sincerely yours, G.F.

The acids of boredom ate deep into the spirit as well as the flesh. To his friend Maxime du Camp he offered a summation of his feelings, during the time he was writing *Madame Bovary*:

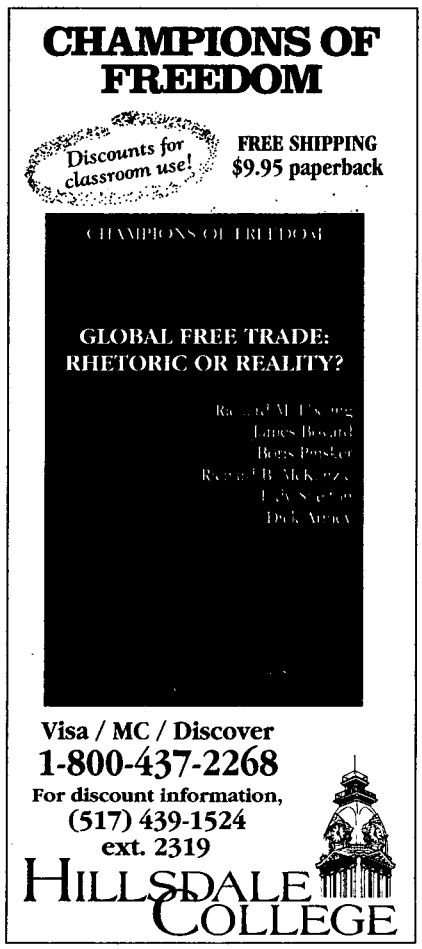
> My youth (you knew only its latter phase) steeped me in an opiate of boredom, sufficient for the remainder of my days. I hate life. There: I have said it; I'll not take it back. Yes, life; and everything that reminds me that life must be borne. It bores me to eat, to dress, to stand on my feet, etc.

This is spiritual disorder of a fatal variety, reminiscent of the Englishman Goethe writes of in *Poetry and Truth*, who killed himself because he was tired of having to get dressed every morning. To be a living creature, with all the limitations that entails, is hateful to Flaubert, this man of soaring imagination. The life he conceives of far outstrips the life he actually leads. Nothing real can compare to the mind's invention.

He used to write at night, beginning to work at ten o'clock, when his mother, whom he lived with until her death, went to bed. He would work for seven hours at a stretch, and in a month might turn out twenty pages. "What a heavy oar the pen is . . . " To see what was worth keeping, he would go over what he had written and shout it out. His friend Théophile Gautier observed that "There is one thing for which he feels a remorse that poisons his life. It's that in *Madame Bovary* he put two genitives one on top of the other: *une couronne des fleurs d'oranger* [a crown of orange blossoms]." To write *Salammbô*, his novel about ancient Carthage, he read Polybius, Appian, Diodorus Siculus, Isidorus, Pliny, Plutarch, Xenophon, and many others; he also traveled to Tunisia. "I no longer think of anything but *Carthage*, and that is what is necessary. A book has never been anything for me but a *way of living* in a particular milieu." Immersing himself in ancient glories, he made himself proof against intolerable modernity.

Modern politics he loathed with a fury. At 18 he wrote, "Someday I must buy myself a slave in Constantinople, a Georgian girl—a man who doesn't own a slave is a blockhead; is there anything more stupid than equality?" Doing research for *The Sentimental Education*, he steeped himself in Fourier and Saint-Simon: "What despots and what boors! Modern socialism reeks of pedantry!" Egalitarian hopes and promises were chimerical; the much vaunted masses were never to amount to anything:

> What is important in history is a little band of men (three or four hundred in



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each century, perhaps) which has never varied from Plato's time to our own; they are the ones who have done everything and who are the conscience of the world. As for the lower orders of society, you will never lift them up.

The Franco-Prussian War of 1870 inspired him to countless outpourings of disgust; he saw it as war for war's sake, and despaired at the soulless darkness that it revealed. To George Sand he wrote, "The incorrigible barbarism of mankind fills me with black gloom. This enthusiasm [for war], unmotivated by any idea, makes me long to die, that I might witness it no longer." To save himself from the war's spiritual ruin, he worked on *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*, about a holy ascetic beleaguered by swarms of demons. However, rebellion in Paris unleashed demons of its own, and Flaubert became preoccupied with the events taking place around him. He hated the Communards and the reactionaries alike. "I am so exasperated by the Right that I wonder if the Communards weren't correct in wanting to burn Paris, because raving madmen are less abominable than idiots. Besides, their reign is always shorter."

Art remained his only solace, and he devoted himself to it with singular tenacity. Reading Balzac's letters, Flaubert faulted him for being obsessed with money and fame, rather than with beauty. To the mother of his protégé Guy de Maupassant he wrote, "The principal thing in this world is to keep one's soul aloft, high above the bourgeois and democratic sloughs. The cult of Art gives one pride; one can never have too much of it. Such is my morality." When George Sand tried to sell him on the "pleasure of doing nothing," he replied with heat: "As soon as I am no longer working on a book or thinking about writing one, I am seized with such boredom I could scream. It seems to me that life is tolerable only if one evades it." Working ferociously was his lifelong evasion, saving him from the pains of boredom.

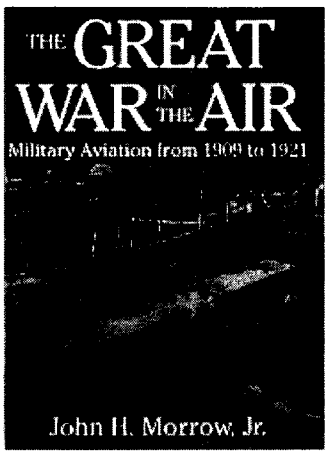
One wishes that Henri Troyat had written more about Flaubert's works than the perfunctory remarks he offers. With boredom as a leitmotif in Flaubert's life, an examination of *Madame Bovary*, his classic study of boredom, would have been enlightening. Emma Bovary, young wife of a provincial doctor, is eaten alive by boredom. "But this, this life of hers was as cold as an attic that looks north; and boredom, quiet as the spider, was spinning its web in the shadowy places of her heart." Seeing her pet greyhound yawn, she is touched, and speaks aloud to the dog, "as if consoling one of the afflicted." (The dog runs away all the same.) After an evening at La Vaubyessard, home of the Marquis d'Andervilliers, she dreams of the splendid life of the wealthy:

> Everything in her immediate surroundings, the boring countryside, the imbecile petits bourgeois, the general mediocrity of life, seemed to be a kind of anomaly, a unique accident that had befallen her alone, while beyond, as far as the eye could see, there unfurled the immense kingdom of pleasure and passion.

She suffers the fatal desire to live beyond her emotional means, conjures romance from the stories she read as a girl. Ultimately, Emma finds adultery as boring as marriage: "Every smile concealed the yawn of boredom, every joy a malediction, every satisfaction brought its nausea, and even the most perfect kisses only leave upon the lips a fantastical craving for the supreme pleasure." Flaubert spoke true when he said, "Madame Bovary is me." Nothing in her life was as rich as her hopes for herself—for love, for excitement, for grandeur. The world is not made in such a way as to satisfy her desires. To want more than it holds is her tragic fate.

To create a character for whom the world is equal to her love for it, Flaubert seized on a woman of the utmost purity, in the story "Un Cœur simple" (A Simple Heart):

> She loves successively a man, her mistress's children, a nephew, an old man she is taking care of, then her parrot. When the parrot dies she has him stuffed, and when she herself is dying, she confuses the parrot with the Holy Ghost. It's not at all ironic, as you suppose, but on the contrary very serious and very sad. I want to arouse people's pity, to make sensitive souls weep, since I am one myself. →



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This tenderest of Flaubert's works is wrought with compassion, and almost Tolstoyan reverence for the holy fool Félicité. Usually, that a Flaubertian character is immune to boredom is the mark of incurable stupidity—as with the insufferable pharmacist Homais in *Madame Bovary*—but Félicité is never bored because true love animates her every action.

Although the aging Flaubert considered his occasional envy of those living ordinary family lives to be a symptom of senility, he was moved to an uncharacteristically sympathetic joy by his manservant's happiness at the birth of his son. Troyat sees insoluble contradiction at the heart of Flaubert's feelings:

> His loathing for the bourgeois was all the stronger because he felt himself to be bourgeois to the bone, with his love of order, comfort, and hierarchy. . . . Obsessed with feminine charm, he refused to become attached to any woman. A revolutionary in art, he was conservative in daily life. Hungering for friendship, he lived most of the time apart from his fellow men. And these perpetual conflicts made him a profoundly unhappy man.

Only art, to which he had devoted his life, was his salvation. But was it truly enough? As the antidote for an otherwise fatal case of boredom, perhaps it really saved his life. However, as a source of happiness, it fell far short. Flaubert's is one of the saddest stories ever told, deprived of joy as of oxygen, leaving him stunted and inconsolably alone. ❐

ROCKETS AND RODEOS AND OTHER AMERICAN SPECTACLES

Thomas Mallon

Ticknor & Fields / 290 pages / $19.95

reviewed by FRANCIS X. ROCCA

Readers of *TAS* already know the work of Thomas Mallon; eight of the twelve pieces in this collection were originally published here. Ranging in length from four to forty-two pages, and in setting from Florida to Alaska, they amount to an eclectic survey of our country in the last decade, from the viewpoint of a perspicacious and sympathetic American spectator.

He is a spectator who notes the odd and telling details: that reporters at the U.N. use manual typewriters (or did, as late as 1989), that Secret Service agents pay cash for their lunch aboard *Air Force Two*. Mallon's eye for this sort of thing can lead him into the realm of the absurd, for which he also has a taste. After an execution in San Quentin's gas chamber, cyanide gas is let into the atmosphere and sulfuric acid into San Francisco Bay. Authorities have considered stopping the executions for environmental reasons.

Mallon savors the ironies, and is more than merely amused by them. Thankful for the security that diplomats have brought to his East Side New York neighborhood, he allows that "if the U.N. has failed in its aim to make the world safe, it can at least be credited with having done that for Turtle Bay." This is the gentle lead-in to a disillusioning tour of the Old World Order's most grandiose symbol.

The delusions and deceptions of others can exasperate this good-natured author, and they do on the campaign trail. "The way tonight's speakers go on about the Pell Grants," he reports from Rhode Island, "one would almost think they were golden guineas extracted from the velvet bag of the senator's personal fortune." Of an animal-rights activist protesting a rodeo he quips: "one feels that if, as the song goes, he could talk to the animals, he'd bore them to death."

But Mallon is hardly ever hostile, and when he is, it's not ugly but entertaining. His review of an experimental movie is worthy of John Simon at his most vitriolic:

> This is the kind of movie that grips you by the eyelids and won't let go until you've fallen asleep. Helen can't act, and Ben can barely breathe. We have somehow been trapped in a seventy-two-minute Warhol film set in San Diego and possessed of what it thinks is a political consciousness. The production values have a willful, ascetic shoddiness: this is the kind of movie in which you can't make out the dialogue, but in which the movement of a piece of silverware is deafening. As for the scenery, one wishes the actors *would* chew it.

But Mallon generally avoids such easy targets. His assessment of another movie (a "superb, repellent" treatment of the Leopold and Loeb thrill killing) is at once balanced and strongly felt, and he picks the director as "somebody to watch out for in every sense of the term."

Along with his fairness and sense of detail, Mallon's kind disposition makes for characterizations that are humane and sometimes memorable. Most enjoyable are the portraits of the principals at a Manhattan criminal trial. The querulous, nitpicking prosecutor; the polished, charming, angry activist of a defense lawyer; and the dreadlocked, Koran-toting defendant himself, who never says a word but laughs from time to time—all gradually emerge from a patient account of the inefficient proceedings. The star turns out to be the hammy, merciful, and commonsensical judge; by the time he passes sentence he has grown on the reader in a way that is rare outside of fiction.

The courtroom piece is the longest in the book, but there are others that read more slowly. Mallon's description of a fair in Owosso, Michigan, evokes the poignant tensions of small-town life in the late twentieth century but suffers from a lack of focus. His account of a rocket launching never takes off, weighed down not only by technical data

Francis X. Rocca is a writer living in New Haven, Connecticut.

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but by minutiae of the technicians' clothing, diet, and chit-chat.

Yet one is inclined to forgive Mallon for going on about space, since he is obviously a man in love. His novel *Aurora 7* was an affectionate look—through the eyes of a rocket-intoxicated youngster—at the early days of NASA. Here, in a sometimes stirring piece on the space shuttle, he all but declares it America's Manifest Destiny to colonize Mars. One even suspects that his sympathy for Dan Quayle, whom he shadows at a golf tournament and a Fourth-of-July parade, is clinched by Quayle's advocacy of the space program.

If occasional overthoroughness is Mallon's vice, it is only the complement of the virtue of thoughtfulness. On a visit to Pearl Harbor, Mallon considers the theory that FDR let the Japanese attack so that the U.S. would join the war, and compares it to the endless speculation on the Kennedy assassination:

> The "investigators" of each "conspiracy" claim to be engaged in useful historical revisionism, but what they are doing might better be characterized as historical *pre*visionism. For the Pearl Harbor contingent it is always 7:54 A.M. on that Sunday morning, a minute before the Japanese planes come through the clouds, and for the JFK gumshoes the Hertz sign in Dealey Plaza says 12:29, not 12:30. . . . The buff can keep scanning the skies or peering over at the grassy knoll happy in the knowledge that this awful, sublime moment doesn't yet have to be over.

After such a passage, the reader is apt to pause and ponder the suggestive truth of what he's read. Yet this writer's most distinctive trait is not thoughtfulness but tenderness. He thinks back fondly to the days when Hollywood movies left audiences in tears, and he likes to end his pieces on an emotional note, if not always a sad one. Sometimes he lapses into sentimentality, but his intention is to leave the reader both moved and reflective. The book closes at an auction of the late Rex Harrison's personal effects, where Mallon muses: "In life, possessions give their owner status. In death, it's more like the reverse, the owner's celebrity, if he had it, electrifying the object with a personal history." It is a sound idea, and one both sad and oddly heartening. ❐

A PLACE AMONG NATIONS: ISRAEL AND THE WORLD

Benjamin Netanyahu

Bantam/467 pages/$24.95

reviewed by JOSEPH SHATTAN

In 1985, the Kuwaiti newspaper *Al-Rai Al-Am* called Benjamin Netanyahu "the enemy's most dangerous agent abroad." ("The enemy," of course, being Israel, not Iraq.) More recently, State Department officials, according to Evans and Novak, have warned of "a potential tragedy" should Mr. Netanyahu—the newly elected leader of Israel's principal opposition party, the Likud—become prime minister.

What is it about Benjamin Netanyahu—Israel's MIT-trained former U.N. ambassador, deputy foreign minister, and principal spokesman during the Gulf War—that inspires such alarm among Arabs and Arabists alike? Perhaps it has something to do with his extraordinary effectiveness in presenting Israel's case to the world. As Israel's advocate, he merits comparison with the brilliant Abba Eban. But while Eban, who began his career in the mainstream of Israel's Labor Party, has moved steadily to the left over the past twenty years, the 43-year-old Netanyahu—whose brother, Jonathan, was killed leading the 1976 Entebbe rescue mission—is a staunch partisan of the "Revisionist" right.

I met Benjamin Netanyahu while we were both students, nearly two decades ago. Back then, I considered myself a Social Democrat and admired Israel's socialist economy. Netanyahu told me that Israel's Labor leaders were a bunch of economic illiterates whose "Bolshevist" policies were ruining his country. He also predicted that Israel's military victories would prove hollow if it didn't win the struggle for Western public opinion. He was right on both counts.

Joseph Shattan, a former speechwriter for Vice President Quayle, is a writer living in Arlington, Virginia.

Fittingly, then, *A Place Among Nations* contains a stinging indictment of Israel's economic policies—both "Bolshevist" (Labor) and "Peronist" (Likud)—and describes Israel's failings at propaganda.

One of the most enduring myths about the Middle East is that all the strife in that violent region is related to the Arab-Israeli dispute. This perception is reinforced by the media, whose focus on Israel borders on the obsessive; and the United Nations, which managed for years to avoid even discussing the Iran-Iraq war, but regularly bashes Israel in the Security Council, the General Assembly, and countless Committees. Netanyahu writes:

> There is something uncanny about the world's capacity to focus on the Arab-Israeli dispute (with total casualties estimated at 70,000 dead over five decades) in the face of the carnage of the *other* Middle Eastern conflicts, such as the Egyptian invasion of Yemen (250,000 dead), the Algerian civil war (1,000,000 dead), the Lebanese civil war (150,000 dead), the Libyan incursion into Chad (100,000 dead), the Sudanese civil war (at least 500,000 dead), and the Iran-Iraq war (over 1,000,000 dead). . . . Especially after the Gulf War (at least 100,000 dead, and possibly many more), no fair-minded person can accept the pretense that the turbulent conflicts raging everywhere in the Middle East can be forced into the Palestinian straitjacket.

But already in the 1930s, British Arabists argued that Zionism was responsible for all their troubles in the Middle East. To secure Arab and Islamic loyalty to the Crown, Britain would have to repudiate the Balfour Declaration and

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scuttle the Jewish National Home. The result was a "white paper," adopted by the Chamberlain government four months before the outbreak of World War II, that placed sharp restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine (Arab immigration to Palestine, of course, went unimpeded), and was strictly enforced by British authorities throughout World War II. But sending boatloads of Jewish "illegal immigrants" back to Europe—and certain death—failed to win Arab affections or guarantee Arab loyalty. On the contrary, while Britain fought for its life, Arabs in Iraq, Egypt, Syria, and Palestine allied themselves with the Nazis, eventually forming an Arab Legion that became part of the SS.

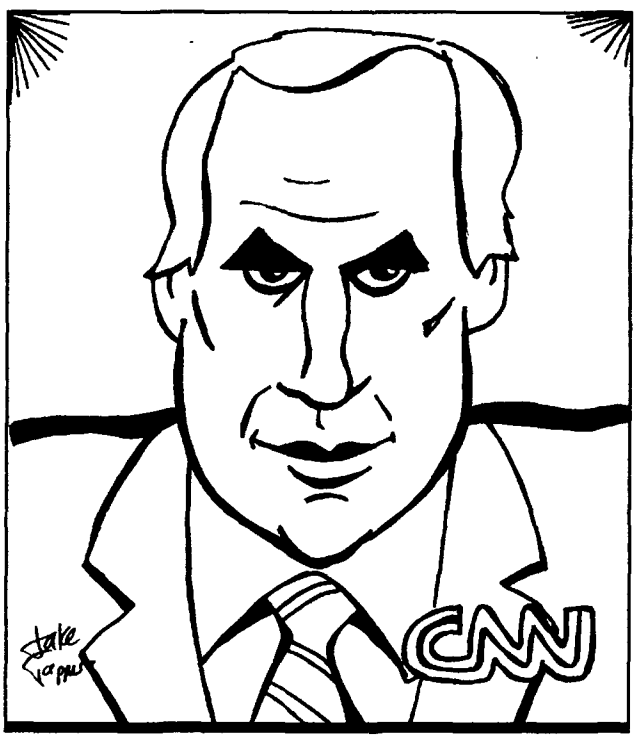
Whatever Israel's sins of omission or commission, then, it cannot logically be blamed for the crisis of legitimacy afflicting the Arab world and the political pathologies ensuing therefrom. But after years of brainwashing, who does *not* believe that the principal victims of the Middle East are the Palestinians, a stateless people whose plight mirrors that of the Jews before Israel's establishment? "There is no way to escape the reality," writes former President Jimmy Carter, "of how intimately intertwined are the history, the aspirations and the fate of the two long-suffering peoples, the Jews and the Palestinian Arabs."

This equation of Palestinian and Jewish suffering would make slightly more sense if Palestinians were in fact stateless. But they have a state. King Hussein's grandfather Abdullah wanted to call this state the "Hashemite Kingdom of Palestine," but at the suggestion of his British advisers named it the "Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan" instead. Whatever its name, however, present-day Jordan encompasses 80 percent of the area known after World War I as Mandatory Palestine. In Netanyahu's words:

> It is absurd to pretend that an Arab in eastern Palestine ("Jordan") who shares language, culture and religion with another Arab some ten miles away in western Palestine (the "West Bank"), an Arab who is often his close relative if not literally his own brother, is a member of a different people. Indeed, the PLO's officials and Jordan's rulers have been the first to admit this.

The PLO's demand for a Palestinian state on the West Bank is in fact a demand for a *second* Palestinian state—to be used as a springboard for the eventual destruction of Israel, as laid out in the PLO's Phased Plan. Not surprisingly, Netanyahu doesn't think that destroying Israel is a very good idea. But if Israel is to avoid destruction, he thinks it must control the West Bank.

Of course, some Israelis believe that if Israel is to be true to its ideals, it must *relinquish* the West Bank. All they would demand of the rulers of a second Palestinian state is a pledge that this state be demilitarized. Netanyahu, however, is justifiably skeptical: demilitarizing even *part* of a sovereign state—Germany's Rhineland after World War I, for example—has usually proved impossible over the long run. But demilitarizing an *entire* sovereign state "is something unheard of in the annals of nations."



Moreover, Palestinians might argue, a demilitarized state would be vulnerable to *Arab* predators. "Never forget this one point," Syria's Hafez Assad once told Yasser Arafat. "There is no such thing as a Palestinian people, there is no Palestinian entity, there is only Syria. You are an integral part of the Syrian people, Palestine is an integral part of Syria. Therefore it is we, the Syrian authorities, who are the true representatives of the Palestinian people." An Israeli demand for a demilitarized West Bank state might have to be accompanied by a pledge to defend such a state against its "legitimate" Syrian rulers.

Netanyahu's insistence on Israeli control of the West Bank does not mean that he is insensitive to the plight of West Bank Palestinians. He would grant the inhabitants of Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah, and Hebron—the great majority of the West Bank's Arab population—control over commerce, religion, education, health, and social welfare. Netanyahu calls this plan, somewhat grandiosely, "the largest-scale experiment with democracy ever conducted in the Arab world."

Netanyahu has relatively little to say about the current "peace process." But his approach can, I think, be summarized as follows: to the extent that the peace process reinforces Israel's capacity to deter Arab attacks, he's for it; to the extent that it undermines Israeli deterrence, he's against it. What he strongly rejects is the notion that Arab-Israeli peace depends on the peace process. In Netanyahu's view, it depends, first and foremost on Israel's strength.

Unfortunately, the entire thrust of the peace process, as currently conceived, is directed at undermining Israeli deterrence. When American officials speak of "land for peace," it's understood that only Israel will be surrendering land. To suggest otherwise—to argue, as Netanyahu does, that for the sake of peace the Arabs, who have waged an unrelenting war of aggression against Israel for nearly fifty years, might have to make territorial concessions of their own—is quite beyond the pale of reasonable discourse. For if U.S. policy-makers ever took Netanyahu's arguments seriously, they might have to entertain the possibility of bringing sustained pressure to bear on the Arabs. And that, alas, is unthinkable.

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Although fundamentalists and pan-Arab nationalists bloodily disagree over many things, on two issues they concur: Both share an abiding hatred of the West, which from the pan-Arab viewpoint has subjected the Arabs to one humiliation after another since Napoleon invaded Egypt in 1798, and from the fundamentalist viewpoint is busily corrupting loyal Moslems with its VCRs and sexual promiscuity. And both believe that the Middle East is an exclusively Arab and Moslem realm. Those who do not accept Moslem-Arab hegemony—Jews, Kurds, Christians, and others—must be forced to do so.

I don't know whether Netanyahu is capable of changing U.S. policy. I am certain, however, that were he to become Israel's prime minister, my former colleagues in the State Department and the National Security Council would "go ballistic" (to use one of their favorite locutions). For me, that is reason enough to pray for Benjamin Netanyahu's continued success. ❐

HITTER: THE LIFE AND TURMOILS OF TED WILLIAMS

Ed Linn

Harcourt Brace / 437 pages / $23.95

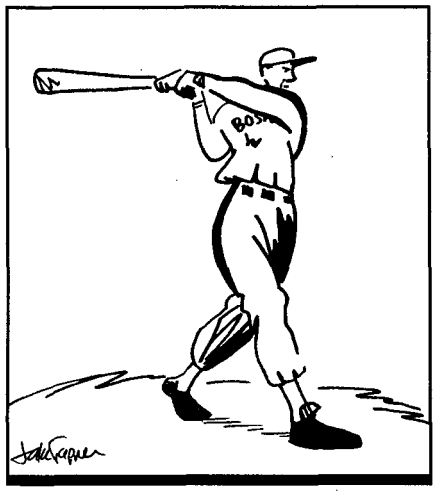
reviewed by M. D. CARNEGIE

When it came to the science of hitting a baseball, Ted Williams wrote the book. It is called, in fact, *The Science of Hitting*, and the cover features a now-legendary schematic of the Splendid Splinter in batting stance, with the strike zone demarcated into color-coded baseballs of different hitting averages—.400 waist-high and red in the middle; .230 low, outside, and gray. If a hitter were doing his job—and no man has ever done the job like Ted Williams—he would be getting a hit only two out of five times the ball came at him right down the pike.

When you consider, then, that it is the pitcher's precise duty to keep the ball away from that sweet zone in the middle, and that the very best pitchers can often as not hurl the ball some 90 m.p.h. in that .230 gray area, and do it from but sixty feet away, it is nothing short of astounding to consider that in 1941, Theodore Samuel Williams got himself a hit more than two times in five. His .406 average that year was, as everybody knows, the last time a major-leaguer has broken the .400 barrier.

What everybody doesn't know, and what Ed Linn points out in this absolutely marvelous book, is that Williams outhit Joe DiMaggio during the latter's record 56-game hitting streak that glorious summer, reaching base 55 times out of 100 to DiMaggio's 44; that Williams was the only .400 hitter in history who did not benefit from the sacrifice-fly rule, and with it would have hit .412 (fourth best of all time); and that Williams's on-base percentage that year, and over his career, are also both major-league records.

Pitchers were afraid of Ted Williams—



so afraid of giving him something in the bright red .400 zone—that in 1957, when he was already 39 years old, he walked once in every 3.87 at bats, the only player under 4.00 ever. So afraid that he holds the record for the most intentional walks *with the bases loaded.* So afraid because, when he was on, he could make the decision whether or not to swing during the last sixteen feet the ball traveled, and could see the rotation of the seams, and actually see the bat make contact with the ball.

His eye was so good that even the umpires would sometimes ask him to make a close call when he was at bat. At his first batting practice after serving two years in the Korean War, he returned to the dugout and told Joe Cronin that home plate was out of line; sure, his manager ribbed him, sure, sure. Williams insisted, and to humor him Cronin had the field surveyed; the plate was out of whack by a fraction of an inch.

Williams was also an iconoclast and screwball, in the finest baseball tradition. Sometimes his shortstop would turn around to give him the count, and find he was arguing with someone in the stands or, more often, that his back was to the game as he practiced the perfect motion of his swing. Once he disappeared through the left field scoreboard in Fenway to nip across the street for a sandwich. He had movie-star looks, and once when a reporter in the locker room asked about the women who adored him, he grabbed his crotch and snarled, "All they want is what I've got right here."

It was the sort of behavior that could not possibly endear him to the Boston writers of his day, who were hands-down the meanest, cruellest, most vicious and scabrous journalists the world of sports will likely ever see. If Bobby Bonilla thinks he's got it rough, he might find some solace in the saga of the Kid.

"It seems disgraceful to me," roared Dave Egan, the legendary Harvard-educated drunk who covered the Sox for the *Boston Record*, "that a person such as Williams is to be given the keys to the city. We talk about juvenile delinquency, and fight against it, and then officially honor a man whom we should officially horsewhip. If this is leadership," he crowed, "I'll have strychnine."

Harold Kaese of the *Boston Evening*

M.D. Carnegie is an assistant editor at the Public Interest.

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Transcript distributed mimeographed copies of this telephone interview with the Splinter, who was off fishing in Florida while his wife was up north giving birth:

REPORTER: Hello, Ted. This is the *Globe*.
WILLIAMS: Yuh.
REPORTER: Have you been able to get a reservation to Boston?
WILLIAMS: Haven't tried.
REPORTER: Aren't you coming up to see the baby?
WILLIAMS: For Christ sake! What could I do up there?
REPORTER: Were you disappointed that it was a girl?
WILLIAMS: Nope.
REPORTER: Then you didn't care?
WILLIAMS: I didn't give a s---.
REPORTER: How's the fishing?
WILLIAMS: Pretty good.

Kaese would have published it, but he held back out of regret for an earlier cheap shot at Williams for not visiting his mother during the off-season.

Long before Sir Charles Barkley, however, Williams knew to accept no duty as a role model to anyone; he knew his only task was to smash the baseball as hard and often as he could, and beyond that—well, nothing. After Williams homered in Fenway on his last at-bat in the majors, his teammates in the dugout urged him to step out onto the field and acknowledge the roaring crowd; "F--- 'em," he replied, and sat motionless with his arms folded, grinning. The crowd cheered and screamed for minutes, but Williams wouldn't budge.

Linn points out that in virtually all categories, only Babe Ruth was his equal, and if the different sacrifice rules are taken into account, Williams's average is five points higher than that of the Babe during his stint with the Yankees. Five prime years of his career were spent serving as a flight instructor during World War II and then as John Glenn's wingman in Korea. One of the true baseball fan's parlor games is to speculate what the Kid's numbers might have been had those seasons been spent on the diamond. *Hitter* offers some extrapolations, but it's not difficult to feel that Williams would have surpassed even these. ❐

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CORRESPONDENCE
(continued from page 10)

inept, wrongheaded bureaucracy can correct the situation by providing instruction in morality. As the late Leonard Reed used to say, this is like attempting to cure a man who's been run over by a truck by having the truck back up over him again.

—Christopher M. Schnaubelt
San Luis Obispo, California

Herbert London replies:

Mr. Schnaubelt makes the erroneous claim that Governor Weld, despite claims to the contrary, has actually kept government out of our bedroom. Republican Governor Weld is the first governor in the nation to establish a Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth which includes the following recommendations:

- Establish public school policies to protect homosexual students from harassment.
- Establish an organization for homosexuals to meet with a faculty adviser.
- Have school libraries purchase films dealing with homosexual behavior.
- Include sexual orientation in human development education.
- Teach about homosexual culture in history, arts, and family life courses.
- Purchase books on homosexual behavior for school libraries.

These reforms, by the way, are merely the tip of the proverbial iceberg. It's fine to say keep the government out of the bedroom, but government has taken sex from the bedroom and put it in the schools. It seems to me we need some government activity to get sex out of this institution even if that means a government-sponsored voucher plan. If Governor Weld is on the right track, then the train is headed off the cliff.

Required Reading

With Al Gore in a position to do some real damage with his sophomoric ignorance of all things scientific, Jonathan H. Adler's review (*TAS*, April 1993) of the latest four tomes dedicated to the ravages and perils of environmental journalism is particularly timely. It is also well done—as far as it goes.

For instance, it fails to mention the unique accomplishment of the *New York Times*'s long-time environmental reporter, Phil Shabecoff. Impossible as it may seem, Shabecoff has managed to write a book even worse than Al Gore's (*A Fierce Green Fire: The American Environmental Movement*, Hill & Wang, 1993). Purportedly a history of the environmental movement, it is no more than a cut-and-paste collection of quotes from the tree-huggers. So bad is it that I doubt that it would pass muster even in a journalism school. How can it be a history of environmental political activity with not a single mention of either Henry Waxman or John Dingell!

But let me suggest the review of two more books recently available to a public badly in need of a wake-up call. The first comes directly from Adler's group of enlightened pilgrims, the Competitive Enterprise Institute. The title is *Environmental Politics*, explaining how the eco-fascists have been able to find allies, some of whom can see some private return in promoting almost any environmental program—like Archer Daniels Midland and oxygenated fuels, to name

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the most venal (after Engelhardt Minerals and catalytic converters, that is). Adler's modesty in not touting CEI's very effective volume is noteworthy, but not altogether well-advised. If you've got it, flaunt it!

Moreover, there is now a curious book dedicated to the discomfiture of the greens. A novel, *The Green Progression* (TOR/St. Martin's Press, 1991), was written by two former EPA employees to describe how the environmental bureaucratic process can be manipulated, and perverted, by those who wish no good to American free enterprise. Authors L. E. Modesitt, Jr. and Bruce Scott Levinson draw a murder, some sex, and even the KGB into their story line of devious doings under the cloak of environmentalism. The result is not quite Tom Clancy, but a worthy effort to use fiction to make the case that we are surrendering to litigation the possibility of more sensible technical approaches to maintaining the environment we have, the most healthy in human history.

—William C. Chapman
Captain, U.S. Navy (Retired)
Atlantic Beach, Florida

Poe Folk

I had not meant to provoke a reply from Mr. Rieselbach but perhaps just some reflection (Correspondence, *TAS*, May 1993). Not to discuss *chiefly* the poetry in writing a biography about a poet is like not discussing the politics of a president, or the "management style" of a manager (see the review of the McNamara biography in the May issue) or the science of a scientist or the painting of a painter or the technique of a basketball player or etc. etc. in a biography of any of these.

Eliot was annoyed by the appeal and continued popularity of Poe. (Your headline writer refers to "The Cask of Amontillado," assuming no explanation needed.) He did envy Poe "one of the finest lines" in English poetry: "The viol, the violet, and the vine." This line (it seems to me) is clearly echoed in Mallarmé's "*Le vierge, le vivace et le bel aujourd'hui.*" Poe was both an excellent short-story writer and the author of several memorable (and highly memorizable) poems.

This is what interested both Baudelaire and Mallarmé. Being good poets, they understood how language can be used; this knowledge makes their translations of Poe work successfully in French. To say that they did not know English well is rough on Baudelaire, but surely incorrect for the English teacher, Mallarmé. Poets of their talent do not "see what they want to see" in another poet's work: they look for what they can use. If they were mistaken in going to Poe, they make good company to be mistaken with. . . .

—Gabriel Austin
New York, New York

Starved for News

R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.'s column "The Worst Book of the Year" (*TAS*, May 1993) cites a number of undeserving Pulitzer prize-winners, including "journalists who have made preposterous claims." For example, Janet Cooke. It must have been for reasons of space that Mr. Tyrrell omitted the Pulitzer award in 1932 to the infamous Walter Duranty, the Moscow correspondent during the horror years of the Stalin dictatorship, "for dispassionate interpretive reporting of the news from Russia." Among Mr. Duranty's "preposterous claims" was his denial that there was any Russian famine. Millions of Russians and Ukrainians starved to death but Duranty wrote in the *New York Times* (March 31, 1933): "There is no actual starvation or deaths from starvation but there is widespread mortality from diseases due to malnutrition."

Even the *New York Times* editorial page recently described Duranty's journalism "as some of the worst reporting to appear in this newspaper." Malcolm Muggeridge, Duranty's contemporary as Moscow correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*, described Duranty as "the greatest liar of any journalist I have met in 50 years of journalism." Since the Pulitzer Prize committee does nothing, the president of Columbia University, who has the power to do so, should publicly withdraw that award.

—Arnold Beichman
Research Fellow
Hoover Institution
Stanford, California

Czech Choo-Choo

I share with Jon Newberry ("Cincinnati on the Vltava," *TAS*, May 1993) the improbable suspicion that the Czech Republic may, at the moment, be the closest thing to paradise on earth.

My own examples are these: When I mistook *Poricany* for *Noratev* on the railway map (an eminently understandable error to anyone but my kids), I got us lost somewhere in eastern Bohemia. In consequence we boarded two trains without any tickets, and in both instances—*both instances,* mind you, *twice! two times!*—the train conductors in their wrinkled blue CSD uniforms contorted, did a little dance, and said: "I can't honestly write you a fine of 10 Crowns (45 cents per person), because that would be more than the price of the whole ticket," and they each charged us the regular price for the trip, and damn government regulations. (Some day I plan to donate $3.60 to the Czech railways.)

The other example is the Bila Labut department store in Prague, where a sign on the jerky escalator plainly proclaims: NO OLD PEOPLE (and an arrow to the elevators). How startlingly *incorrect,* and practical.

To help me remember how it feels to spend time with decent, un-guiltridden, straightforward people, and drink good beer, I hope to read Mr. Newberry in future articles.

—Bob Faltin
Edmonton, Alberta

Duck Scoop

Okay, I'm prepared to hate the new *Bartlett's* ("You Can't Look It Up," by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr., *TAS*, May 1993), but one good reason for not quoting Reagan's "Honey, I forgot to duck" is that the line was first spoken by Jack Dempsey to his wife, who'd asked, "What happened, Jack?" after he lost a fight.

Did you look under Dempsey?

—Saul David
Van Nuys, California

What's in a Number?

Richard Lamb's review of the biography *Lord Beaverbrook: A Life* (*TAS*, May 1993) reads: "Chisholm and Michael Davie do an admirable job of explaining Beaverbrook's often murky role in events like Edward VII's abdication . . ."

Edward VII did not abdicate. However, Edward VIII, who later became the Duke of Windsor, did. In fact, as a wit at the time put it, he went from being First Lord of the Admiralty

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to third-mate on a tramp steamer. Your copy editor should be sent to the Tower.

—C. Anthony Burke
Arlington, Virginia

The editors reply:
Not Richard Lamb's fault. It was "Edward VIII" in typescript until a terminal "I" was lopped off during typesetting.

Big Ben

I just read "Two Steps Forward" (*TAS*, April 1993). My first-ever Benjamin J. Stein.

Who is this guy, why is he so nice, and how can he mist my eyes with such simple words while I am eating French Toast at Denny's at high noon?

And don't you allow any *lousy* writers in your magazine? At all?

—Oakley K. Davidson
Clarendon Hills, Illinois

This is to let you know how much I appreciate Ben Stein's journal every month in *TAS*. It is by far the best regular column in *TAS*, or in any of the many other magazines I regularly read. I get the impression that Mr. Stein is a real person, as it were, and one that it would be possible to have a real conversation with on any number of topics. . . .

—David Hudson
Hilo, Hawaii

Sowell Trainee

Please let Thomas Sowell know that apart from a few very personal satisfactions I have enjoyed recently, his brief piece, "Multicultural Instruction" (*TAS*, April 1993), is the best thing that's happened to me this month.

—Richard A. Biagioli
Westfield, New Jersey

Ciao Time

I am pleased that Mr. Jerry Dorbin's 50-year search for an understanding of the term *pastafazool* came to a degree of fruition (Correspondence, *TAS*, May 1993). However, this word—which is still well known to most first- and second-generation Americans of Southern Italian descent—is a modification (corruption) of *pasta e fagioli*. The usual combination consists of macaroni and beans—not peas (*piselli*) or other vegetables (*legumi*). A single bean is *fagiolo*. The plural form is *fagioli*, not *fagiole*. The correct pronunciation of *fagioli* is strictly phonetic—i.e. *fa*—as in father, *gi*—as in gee, *ol*—as in old, and *i*—as in machine. A pot of *pasta e fagioli* was the sustenance of many Southern Italian immigrants who settled in upstate New York seventy-five to one hundred years ago. It still appears occasionally on the dinner tables of their descendants.

As an aside, take *cum grano salis* the correctness of the Italian that appears on the menus of many restaurants.

—William C. Caccamise, Sr., M.D.
Rochester, New York

In response to Jerry Dorbin's 50-year pursuit of *pastafazool*—I must say that *any* self-respecting, Brooklyn-born Italian worth his salami could have told him (had he asked) that the words "pasta fazool" are dialect for the grammatically correct Italian words *pasta e fagioli*; which means pasta and *beans*, not pasta and peas or pasta and vegetables.

Evidently, Santa Fe is suffering from a severe lack of Italians, and there is no one there to tell him "Come ona my house"! One wonders what else Mr. Dorbin does with his time?!

—Vincenza de Luca
Kerrville, Texas

Reckless Motorists

Grover G. Norquist's reference to the "motor voter" legislation in his April column ("Congress's Feisty Frosh") is certainly valid as far as it goes, but it conveys only a small part of the atrocity. Without any indication whatever that the people want it, or even understand its implications, the new law will (1) federalize voting functions that have always been regarded as state responsibility, (2) impose enormous costs on state and county governments without adequate compensation, and (3) generate a potential for voter fraud far beyond what the country has ever seen.

The fraudulent nature of this action starts with the official justification for it: "to make it easier for persons to register to vote." Actually, there is no evidence that existing registration procedures impose hardship, no solid indication that easing registration procedures increases voter participation, and no evidence the public is clamoring for such a change. Finally, there is no evidence that easing voter registration improves the quality of government.

Under the new law, people applying for driver's licenses will be automatically registered, and state, county, and local officials will be required to assist in voter registration as an added responsibility unrelated to their work. The law will require local election and Postal Service officials to generate costly new data banks and coordinate them with each other.

One of the dark secrets of voter qualification issues today is that election officials have virtually no way of verifying the citizenship of voter applicants, and therefore seldom, if ever, make the attempt. The new federal procedures will vastly increase the potential for voting by non-citizens.

The way to improve voter turnout is not to scale down the qualification and registration of voters. Rather, it is to restore public confidence in the integrity, and the competence, of our political system. This nefarious law does exactly the opposite.

—Stan Langland
Belmont, California

(continued on page 75)

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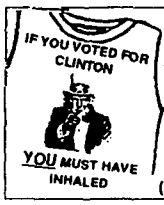

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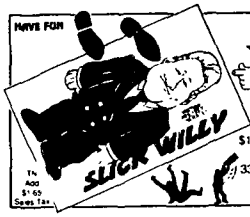

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CORRESPONDENCE
(continued from page 71)

By Guam

. . . In the May issue's "Continuing Crisis," it is implied that Governor Joseph Ada is some sort of left-wing pacifist for seeking the closure of the naval air station on Guam. This is absurd. Neither Governor Ada, a Republican, nor the great majority of Guam residents, who also support the closure of NAS, wants to close all military bases on Guam. However, there are currently two military air bases on Guam, NAS and an Air Force facility. Both are underused, and either one alone could handle all of Guam's military air traffic. NAS occupies a substantial amount of potentially prime commercial or residential real estate in the center of the island. NAS also borders on Guam's international airport, thereby blocking expansion of the civilian airport and hindering growth of the private sector tourist industry. For these reasons, Governor Ada and most Guamanians would like to see military air operations consolidated at the air force base, so that NAS can be closed and the land which it is located on returned to productive use.

I am mystified as to why your magazine would oppose this and would belittle Governor Ada's position. Do you believe that federal control of land is better than local control? Do you want taxpayers on the U.S. mainland to continue paying for the maintenance of an unneeded facility? Are you opposed to expansion of the private sector on Guam because you want to make Guam dependent on federal hand-outs? None of these positions seem to be consistent with your purported conservative ideals. . . .

—Seth Forman
Agana, Guam

A Fragrance-Free Rag

Aside from contents—always provocative and lucid—there are two things I love about your exemplary publication: (1) no blow-in subscription postcards (which invariably fall on the floor); and (2) no perfumed inserts (which make me sneeze). Thanks. Stay basic.

—Irwin Chusid
Hoboken, New Jersey

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New York Times

The venerable *Times*'s proud successor to the likes of Arthur Krock and James Reston, Miss Anna Quindlen, addresses a personal bull to the president of the United States in the voice of high girlishness that has become her trademark:

Go back to February, when you managed with some eloquence to convince [Midwesterners] that they had to join you in busting the deficit and that it would require pain all around.

They knew what that was like because they've done deficit-busting themselves. Times aren't what they were, and after putting the bread, the milk, the chicken and the toilet paper in the cart they know the sad truth: There is no more room, wallet-wise, for the Sara Lee cheesecake, the peaches and the dearer cuts of meat. The steaks, the veal and the pork . . .

[May 12, 1993]

Washington Post

The slop that ensues when the sempiternally fourth-rate confronts a third-rate intellect—reporter Martha Sherrill ensnared by the babble of Hillary:

It just happened, slipped out—from deep inside of her—in a quiet but stunning way. It was April and her father was dying in the hospital and Hillary Rodham Clinton was standing at a lectern in Austin: "We need a new politics of meaning," she said. People wondered what to make of this at first. Maybe they still wonder what to make of it. But there in Texas, she finally revealed the biggest piece of herself yet, just said it: In the midst of redesigning America's health care system and replacing Madonna as our leading cult figure, the new First Lady has already begun working on her next project, far more metaphysical and uplifting.

"It's not going to be easy," she said.

What?

"It's not going to be easy," she said, "redefining who we are as human beings in this postmodern age."

[May 6, 1993]

The Great Books Series

The beginnings of the kind of literary dispute sure to absorb academic minds from Berkeley, California, to Ithaca, New York. Either Mark C. Taylor is essaying postmodernism, or he has just spilled a bowl of alphabet soup on his manuscript:

Why is L.A., why are the deserts so fascinating? It is because you are delivered from all depth there—a brilliant, mobile superficial neutrality, a challenge to meaning and profundity, a challenge to nature and culture, an outer hyperspace, with no origin, no reference points. . . . The fascination of the desert: immobility without desire. Of Los Angeles: insane circulation without desire. The end of aesthetics.

(Jean Baudrillard)

I have come from the desert as one comes from beyond memory.

(Edmond Jabès)

Frames: Desert, Dessert. One word that is at least two—one spelling, two pronunciations; two spellings, one pronunciation. Desert. Des(s)ert. After dinner desserts—just or otherwise. Neither dinner nor not dinner, but a supplement. Something like a frame that repeats, while inverting, the hors d'oeuvre. No longer before but after the *repas*., *Le repas*: what is a *pas* that is a *repas*? Does the doubling of the k/not bind or rebind—*ligare* or *religare*? Desert . . . Des(s)ert . . . Des(s)erts. What is des(s)erted in the desert? Desert(s), site or non-site of wandering, erring—Vegas . . . *vagus*. Delivery *from* all depth . . . lights, pure light, absence of shadow? Or delivery to a certain *re-pas* that is beyond . . . *le pas au-delà*, where the absence of shadow is the shadow of spirit.

'Postmodernism' is, of course, a notoriously problematic term . . .

[from "Reframing Postmodernisms," by Mark C. Taylor, in Shadow of Spirit: Postmodernism and Religion, *edited by Philippa Berry and Andrew Wernick, Routledge, 274 pages, $54.95]*

New York Times Magazine

Prose of dubious quality and thoughts of time-honored stupidity from Richard Ford, "the novelist":

Some part of us knows the Republicans are secretly to blame. Twenty years of waiting for our interests to somehow become "linked" with rich people's, and for goodness to trickle down on us from above like gilded snowflakes at the end of a long, dry winter, caused all of us to hunger for something actual in even the least of our institutions, baseball included. And when what was actual, money, of course, did not trickle our way finally but the other way, we were left even hungrier, and also cynical and puritanical about the malleable character of truth—suspicious, to say the least, about the solid foundations of most everything.

[April 4, 1993]

New York

A scholarly essay of the utmost importance in *New York* magazine sadly validates the old saw "The more things change the more they remain the same sex." To the barricades!

One of the biggest changes in the lesbian community is the political influence it is wielding within the larger gay world. What took so long? It's simple, lesbians say. Gay men have always treated gay women the same way straight men have treated straight women.

"Lesbians have always been in the gay movement," says Rita Mae Brown, "and we have always been ignored. One of the saddest realizations of my life is that a woman can be a lesbian and not be a feminist. That she can be the good gay Girl Scout and make the coffee. There was always this feeling we let the gay men speak for us and then we do the work. The nineties have brought a new strength within the lesbian community to stand up and say, 'Well, no, these are my needs.' "

[May 10, 1993]

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New Republic

The Rev. David Denby explicates the humorless condition of his fellow "liberals" with, dare we say it, another of the liberals' plenteous whines:

Hughes fears no man or woman, but most liberals shrink from hurting anyone's feelings. That is why James Wolcott was being disingenuous when, in the course of defending Rush Limbaugh recently in the *New Yorker*, he called on liberals to stop whining and "lean into the microphone." In other words, get your own demagogues, bullies and wits. But as Wolcott surely knows, American liberals have committed themselves to abandoning the narcissism of the tribe; they are committed to respecting every group in the country. If conservatives have been making most of the jokes in recent years, that's because it's so much easier for them. For the liberal, everyone matters. That is the American glory and the American horror.

[May 10, 1993]

William Mitchell College of Law
(St. Paul, Minnesota)

A memo from law professor Peter Erlinder on behalf of Susan Robinson, a likely choice to be Bill Clinton's second attorney general:

On April 30, 1993, our former colleague, Susan Robinson, will be sentenced in federal court in Madison, Wisconsin on her plea of guilty to six counts of bank robbery. . . . Sue needs the help of the entire William Mitchell Community to help the judge understand that this is one of those situations in which the Guidelines simply do not apply.

Sue Robinson has never been arrested for so much as a traffic violation before her arrest on these charges. . . She is the last person one would expect to be involved in anything illegal.

Sue has been evaluated by a noted expert in gambling addiction, Dr. Lynn Rambeck. . . . All of her personal funds, and those taken from the banks, went directly to the casino within hours after the robberies. She kept none for herself. . . .

Sue is very concerned about the pain and fear that she caused to bank employees. She used no weapons in the robberies, but she did have a toy gun that fell out of her pocket during one robbery. She used "Pepperguard," a natural product, to prevent others from following her. She was concerned that chemical "Mace" was too strong and might harm someone.

[undated]

Boston Globe

On the correspondence page of the *Globe*, an excited report on the historic lesbian avengers, who, alas, were still strangely attracted to do their bit at the base of the largest phallic symbol in North America:

In fact, *Globe* coverage minimally touched on the array of weekend-long events, both somber and celebratory, surrounding Sunday's march—dances, religious services, rallies such as the Saturday night Dyke March, the largest women-only march in Washington for lesbian lives. This demonstration culminated at the Washington Monument, where activists from the group Lesbian Avengers ate fire amid thousands of women who chanted, "The fire will not consume us; we'll use it to better our lives."

[April 29, 1993]

Vanderbilt Register

Two former coeds give the erudite editor of an esteemed university publication a condign dose of re-education, demonstrating anew that college life is grim business in pursuit of the trivial:

Use of coed in headline draws flak

Editor's note: I blundered. I offer the following quote by Samuel Johnson as an excuse, albeit a weak one. *He who has much to do will do something wrong.*

To the Editor:

An article in the April 22 *Register* appeared under the headline "Coeds eager to begin yearlong fellowship at Lloyd's of London." For almost 20 years, I have engaged in a (so far as I know) one-woman crusade against the noun "coed"; this headline gives me another opportunity to object.

The usual dictionary definition of a coed is "a female student at a coeducational institution." This seems innocuous enough, but it is not by chance that *only women* can be coeds. Because the word refers only to female students, "coed" implicitly conveys the notion that women are out of place in education, that they are of secondary importance, that they are interlopers in a male preserve. Full gender equity in U.S. education does not yet exist; for example, classroom research consistently shows that female students are called on less often, receive less encouragement, and are more apt to be interrupted than are their male counterparts. A small step toward changing the attitudes underlying these patterns would be to scuttle "coed," since the noun seems to serve no purpose but to distinguish female from *regular* (i.e., male) students.

Sincerely,
—Karen E. Campbell
Associate Professor of Sociology
Acting Director of Women's Studies

Read on Professor Campbell. You are not alone in your crusade.

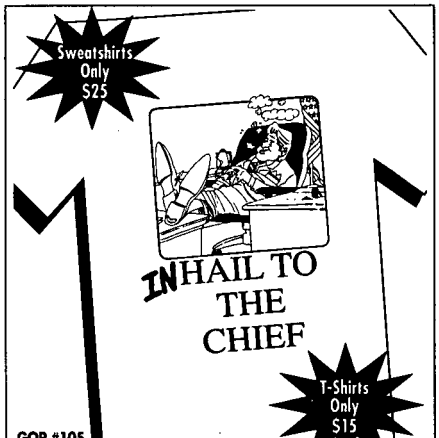
Dear Editor,

I was dismayed to read in this week's *Register* the headline "Coeds eager to begin yearlong fellowship at Lloyd's of London." The term "coed" assigns to undergraduate women second class citizenship in a coeducational institution because only they are so designated. Many [sic] have never been referred to as "coeds."

I am familiar with some of the difficulties in writing headlines and suspect that the term was used because it fit the space. But since the *Vanderbilt Register* has an excellent record when it comes to gender neutral language, I call this particular headline to your attention because I believe you want to avoid such usage.

Sincerely yours,
—Nancy A. Ransom
Director
Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center

[April 26-May 2, 1993]



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Fratfalls

by Sandy Hume

A college buddy of mine called a few weeks ago to deliver the news that Delta Upsilon, our old fraternity at Vermont's Middlebury College, has been placed on "indefinite probation" after a three-year experience with admitting female members. Technically, this means that our house will be converted into a dorm for general use and the rushing of new members will cease. Delta Upsilon will likely never recover.

In the last few years coeducation mandates have been delivered to fraternities at Trinity College in Connecticut and Bowdoin College in Maine, and—after a faculty report labeled them sexist, racist, and homophobic—Tufts University in Massachusetts is next. Ivy League dining clubs and Yale's secret societies have either already admitted women or are in the process of doing so. If DU's experience is any indication, opening up these institutions may shut them down. This is, in fact, what many faculty members and administrators wanted all along.

As the jock house on campus, DU (which detractors say stands for "Dumb and Ugly") made an inviting target. At the annual spring toga party in 1988, brothers hung out the window a mannequin adorned with a sexually suggestive name. Enraged feminists demanded that DU and five other fraternities be abolished. The faculty, by an overwhelming majority, voted to do just that.

Fraternities appeared doomed. In the on-campus debate that raged for months, critics assailed them as bastions of sexism that afforded men opportunities not available to women—fraternities threw parties in the prime social spaces on campus and lived in large, attractive (from the outside) houses. And fraternity brothers benefited from "networks" that gave them an advantage after graduation.

The decision went to the trustees, who in January 1990 ordered the fraternities to accept women. Seeing abolition as too severe, the trustees sought to extend fraternity life to women while softening its rougher edges. (Sororities died out on campus in the 1970s, and in the current climate it would be unthinkable to settle for their restoration.)

Fraternity members protested, arguing that abolition violated their right to freedom of association. The administration disagreed. As Dean of Students Ann Hanson put it, "Part of your freedom to associate as an all-male group deprives me of my freedom to associate as part of your group."

But to say that excluding someone violates his constitutional rights is to miss the essence of the right to freedom of association—as DU argued, to no avail. That the college owned DU's house allowed it freedom to impose its will; only Delta Kappa Epsilon owned its own house, and it launched a court battle that continues to this day. One fraternity moved off-campus, but the administration outlawed that move, and announced that anyone participating in an "underground" fraternity would face suspension.

At the time of the trustees' decision, we in DU were taking regular "gender-awareness" classes, learning, as Dean Hanson put it, to talk "about persons instead of bimbos." Female members were inevitable. We lacked the money to fight, and our first female pledges—six in all—were admitted the next fall. Now under the control of a committee, we were instructed to meet "guidelines" for the first year of coeducation that required at least one-third of the pledge class be female. Middlebury had in place a liberal "open rush" policy that prohibited issuing bids—anyone who wanted to join a house had to be admitted. Without such bids, the house could not limit the number of male pledges and meet the prescribed quota. Thus, DU found itself in trouble the first year.

And then came the hazing issue. Hazing at DU had never been of the now largely extinct drink-this-grain-alcohol-until-you're-comatose variety (indeed, our pledges were *forbidden* to drink alcohol). Initially, one girl contacted the deans to complain that her roommate, a DU pledge, had been forced to do laundry for brothers, as well as leave in the middle of the night for pledge meetings. Then, last year, word reached the deans that female pledges had joined in the traditional dogfood dinner, and an investigation ensued.

The administration put DU on probation for a year and took away the house. DU responded with a keg party/protest/riot, which left the house looking like Hurricane Andrew had stopped in for a beer. I asked a brother about the absence of nearly every spoke in the three-story stairway banister, and he smiled: "We call it the monorail."

The monorail party has brought further possible sanctions—a termination order has been put before president John McCardell for final ruling. As it stands, the faculty and others who supported abolition have won this round. The Catch-22 of the no-bid/quota system and the very nature of the fraternity itself triggered its demise.

As the termination order awaits the final judgment of President McCardell, a Maryland court is handling a case of a young girl who wanted to join a formerly all-male enclave and found she did not like the consequences once she did. In 1989 Tawana Hammond tried out as a running back for the Francis Scott Key varsity football team in Union Bridge, Maryland. In her first scrimmage she was tackled and ended up on a life-support system for four months. She has since recovered enough to file a $1.5 million suit against the county school system for not adequately informing her of the risks of the game. ❐

Sandy Hume is The American Spectator*'s editorial intern.*

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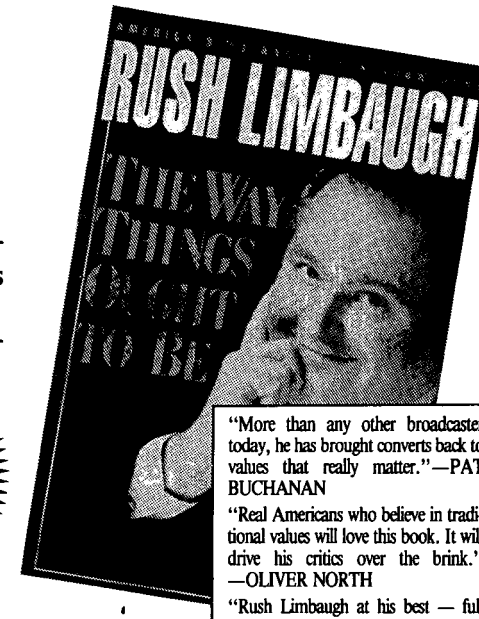

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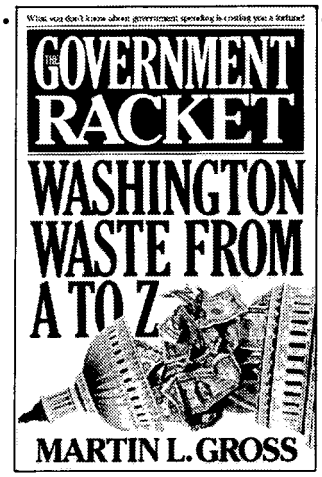
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